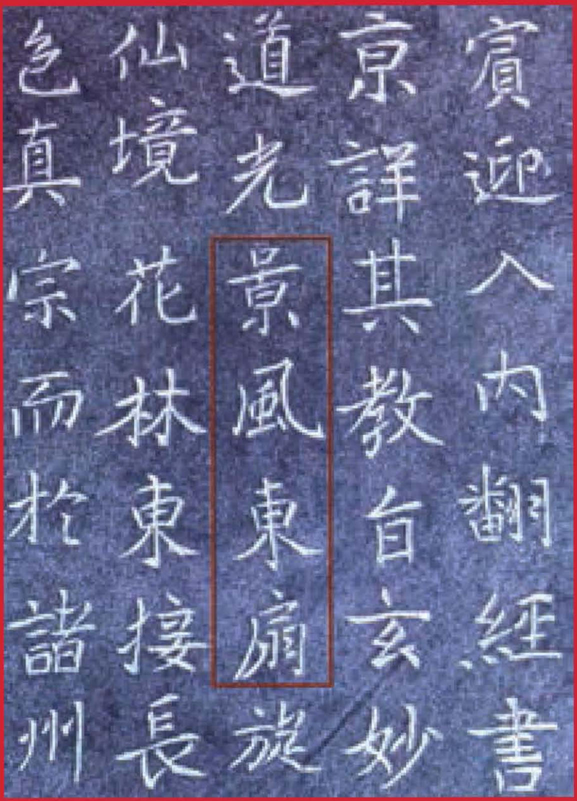
Li Tang and Dietmar W. Winkler (Eds.)

Winds of *Jingjiao*

Studies on Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia



orientalia – patristica – oecumenica vol. 9

LIT

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herausgegeben von/edited by

Dietmar W. Winkler
(Universität Salzburg)

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Cover foto: Excerpt from the Xi'an Fu Stele (Photo: Li Tang) with the words "the wind of Jingjiao blowing eastward" put in a box.

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INTRODUCTION: WINDS OF *JINGJIAO*

As early as AD 781, the writer of the Xi'an Fu inscription described the spread of Syriac Christianity (called "Jingjiao 景教" in Chinese) to China as a wind blowing eastward 景風東扇.[1] Yet, one may wonder how this eastward wind of mission left its mark on Central Asia and China as it swept across Eurasia. The discovery of both the Xi'an Fu Stele in 1623/5 and the Dunhuang "Nestorian" manuscripts in the early 20th century unearthed a buried history of Syriac Christianity in China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), whereas the numerous Syriac Christian tombstones and manuscripts found in Central Asia and many parts of China during the last two centuries have enabled us to map various diasporic Syriac Christian communities within the Mongol empire (13th – 14th centuries). However, between the two Chinese historical epochs of Tang (7th – 9th centuries) and Yuan (13th – 14th centuries), there is a period of more than 300 years, during which few traces of Syriac Christians in the aforementioned area were left behind. The question remains as to whether it is possible to bridge the time gap between these two historical eras and how far we can reconstruct a coherent history of Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia based on the fragmentary evidences of both archaeological discoveries and literary records available.

Given the paucity of historical records as well as the ambiguity in some of the extant records, studies on Syriac Christianity in Central Asia and China have encountered many difficulties. However, archaeological discoveries and research initiatives have helped to better our understanding, and sometimes reinterpreting, of the history unknown. Among the major discoveries, beside the celebrated Xi'an Fu Stele, are the numerous Syriac Christian gravestone inscriptions from Central Asia and China, the inscription of the Luoyang *Jingjiao* Pillar (found in 2005) and the Turfan Christian fragments. Meanwhile, the recent re-emergence of four of the "lost" Dunhuang *Jingjiao* manuscripts published by Kyōu shooku (杏雨書屋), the library of the Takeda Science Foundation in Osaka, Japan,[2] has added one more piece to the unfinished historical mosaic.

Since 2003, the Salzburg International Conference on the Church of the East in China and Central Asia, which is convened on a three-year cycle, has provided an academic platform for scholars around the world to discuss and share their

[1] The Xi'an Fu Inscription, column 13.
[2] See article in this volume by Matteo NICOLINI-ZANI.

new research findings on Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia. The present volume is a collection of papers from the 4th Salzburg International Conference of this kind held in June 2013. Regarding the spread of Syriac Christianity from Mesopotamia to China, the papers in this volume cover a wide range of topics from manuscripts and inscription, to the historical, liturgical and theological perspectives of Syriac Christianity in this geographic realm.

The first part of this collection deals with various archaeological finds including manuscripts and inscriptions. The progress of research on Syriac Christianity in Asia as a whole depends heavily on new archaeological discoveries. However, the increasing value of each new archaeological find can also give rise to potential abuse of information, rash evaluation of artefacts or sometimes even forgery of relics by certain profit-seeking antiques dealers. Therefore, verifying the authenticity of newly discovered relics should come in the first place. Regarding the Chinese Dunhuang "Nestorian" manuscripts whose exact whereabouts was unknown for several decades after their discovery in the early 20th century, doubts about their authenticity have been raised in the scholarly world. Fortunately, the discovery of the Luoyang *Jingjiao* Pillar in 2005, and the publication of the original four Dunhuang "Nestorian" manuscripts by their collectors in Japan in 2010 have provided an access to verifying these "lost" manuscripts. A detailed report on these "lost and found" manuscripts is found in the first article of this volume, introduced by Matteo Nicolini-Zani.

By the same token, a newly claimed "Nestorian" epitaph belonging to Hua Xian, a Tang local official from Luoyang during the 9th century appeared some time ago in the midst of doubts. Both its authenticity and part of its content are in question. Therefore, one needs to exercise caution in front of any newly claimed archaeological finds before any conclusions can be drawn. Apart from the issue on relics authenticity, the first part of this volume also deals with other archaeological finds such as the Syriac Crosses in Central and Southwest China, the Tangtse Sogdian and Chinese rock inscriptions, the Turfan fragment on commemorating the saints, Syriac gravestone inscriptions from Central Asia, the Garshuni Turkish manuscript kept in John Rylands University Library in Manchester and the Syriac manuscript on exorcism found in Khara-Khoto.

The second part of this volume focuses on the historical perspectives of Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia discussing issues from calendar, Syriac missionary strategies to the administration of Christian communities during the Tang and the Mongol-Yuan period. Contributors raise various historical or philological questions on terminology and names contained in the primary sources, for instance, why did the Xi'an Fu inscription erected in AD 781 enter the name of Henanisho' II as the then patriarch of the Church of the East, who actually had died two years earlier. Two papers discuss this problem with counterarguments and opinions. Another unanswered classical question posed repeatedly

and discussed in one of the papers in this volume is why Syriac Christianity was called *Jingjiao* in Chinese during the Tang period and *Yelikewen jiao* during the Mongol-Yuan period.

The third part of this book addresses the issues concerning Syriac liturgical tradition and theological reflections. Two articles elaborate on the sacraments of the Assyrian Church of the East, whereas other papers attempt to reflect on the enculturation and contextualization of Syriac Christianity in China and its relations to Buddhism with a special interest in Buddhist loanwords in Chinese "Nestorian" documents.

No doubt, the winds of *Jingjiao* blew eastward and reached as far as the Chinese shores. Syriac Christianity spread and flourished in China and Central Asia until the 14th century. Studies on the history and impact of Syriac Christianity in this geographic realm will contribute to preserving the Syriac Christian heritage as a whole. The topics contained in this present volume are diverse and the discussions will continue during our next conference. As we are preparing for the 5th Salzburg Conference on Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia, which will take place in June 2016, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our conference participants who took part in the last four conferences and all our contributors to this present volume for their scholarly insights.

The Pro Oriente Foundation, the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg and the "Zentrum zur Erforschung des Christlichen Ostens" (formerly "Mayr-Melnhof Institut für den christlichen Osten") have been faithful sponsors of our conferences thus far. Without their generous support, the 4th conference on the Church of the East in China and Central Asia would not have been made possible. Meanwhile, the production and editing of such a conference volume has been a strenuous task including the final process of typesetting which would not have gone so smoothly without the kind help from Joachim Jakob who deserves a big "Dankeschōn".

Li Tang
December, 2015
In Salzburg

Manuscripts & Inscriptions

THE DUNHUANG *JINGJIAO* DOCUMENTS IN JAPAN: A REPORT ON THEIR REAPPEARANCE

Matteo NICOLINI-ZANI
Monastery of Bose, Italy

in collaboration with
Hidemi TAKAHASHI
University of Tokyo, Japan

In the field of literary and historical studies on Christianity in Tang China (*Jingjiao*), documentary sources are few, often unavailable, and usually unreliable, thus hindering research. Discoveries and rediscoveries of documentary sources in the last few years, however, have shown that unexpected surprises are still possible even in this field of ancient manuscripts and inscriptions. Research on Chinese *Jingjiao* is not exhausted; on the contrary, it has been stimulated by some recent events that we will now describe.

I.

In 2006 the academic world was stirred by the discovery in Luoyang of a Christian funerary pillar dated 815, with a long Chinese inscription and a finely carved decoration. As is evident from the numerous publications in China since then, this unearthing by chance of a Tang Christian inscription in Luoyang has aroused great interest among Chinese scholars. Most of the articles related to this discovery were collected and published in 2009 in a volume edited by Professor Ge Chengyong 葛承雍.[3] A few studies in English reported the discovery to Western scholarly circles,[4] published the transcription and the translation of the text carved on the pillar,[5] and investigated in greater detail the contents of the inscription.[6]

[3] See GE (ed.) 2009. This fine book provides twelve useful plates with clear reproductions of the rubbing of the pillar's text and decoration and is enhanced by the insertion of sixteen high-quality color photographs of the Christian relic.

[4] See TANG 2009 and NICOLINI-ZANI 2010.

[5] See NICOLINI-ZANI 2009.

[6] See NICOLINI-ZANI 2013 and ZHANG 2013.

In addition to its artistic value and its historical importance in providing new details concerning the Christian community in Luoyang, the philological value of this new discovery is considerably high. It proves that what was suspected to be a forged manuscript, namely, the manuscript that bears the title of *Da Qin jingjiao xuanyuan (zhi)ben jing* 大秦景教宣元(至)本經 (*The Book of the Luminous Religion of Da Qin on the Unveiling of the Origin and the Attaining of the Root*) and that belonged to the Chinese scholar Li Shengduo 李盛鐸 (Li Muzhai 李木齋 1859–1935), is authentic. The two fragmented texts, the one carved on the pillar and the other in the manuscript, match and even complement each other almost perfectly. It is clear now that the text of the manuscript is an original *Jingjiao* text and that it can be edited, translated, and studied much more thoroughly than before, when scholars had to take into account the possibility that they were dealing with a forgery.

II.

The manuscript of *Da Qin jingjiao xuanyuan (zhi)ben jing* is one of the so-called "Nestorian manuscripts from Dunhuang", which were hidden somewhere in Japan and have been for a long time surrounded by a cloud of mystery. After they were purchased by different Japanese collectors from private collections in China in the first decades of the twentieth century and partly retrieved by Japanese scholars like Haneda Tōru 羽田亨 (1882–1955), the whereabouts of these documents were unknown to the academic world since the upheavals of World War II. As Max Deeg (Cardiff University) pointed out in a communication presented in 2012, "the fact that the originals were not accessible any more after World War II finally led mainly Chinese scholars to the conclusion that some of them were fakes, and this led to a vicious circle of obscuring their existence and whereabouts even more since obviously their alleged owners did not want to run a chance of verifying these allegations."[7] Constant rumours that these Japanese manuscripts were hidden away here and there in Japan and would not be accessible very soon were circulated for years, with no possibility to verify them.

New light was unexpectedly shed on this mysterious story in 2010, when the Kyōu shooku (杏雨書屋), the library of the Takeda Science Foundation (武田科学振興財団) in Osaka, held a special exhibition of fifty-eight ancient Dunhuang manuscripts in its "Dunhuang secret collection" (*Tonkō hikyū* 敦煌秘笈) from 19-24 April. Among the seventeen documents displayed in the sec-

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[7] We thank Professor Max Deeg (Cardiff University) for having shared with us the text of his communication on "Recent Discoveries and Rediscoveries for the Study of Christianity under the Tang: A Brief Overview" presented at the International Syriac Studies Symposium "Syriac in its Multi-Cultural Context" in Mardin, Turkey, in April 2012. The proceedings of this conference have not been published yet.

tion "Life and Faith" of the exhibition were four *Jingjiao* manuscripts.[8] The *Jingjiao* manuscripts supposed to be "lost" or "hidden", thus, were unexpectedly located and made public in Osaka.

Actually, a year before the exhibition in Osaka, that is, in March 2009, the Takeda Science Foundation had started the publication of a ten-volume series of a catalogue of manuscripts from the *Tonkō hikyū* collection (one volume)[9] and facsimiles of the manuscripts (nine volumes).[10] Since the publication was completed in 2013 and time has already elapsed from the re-emerging of the manuscripts, but no report on it has yet appeared in Western publications, and since we consider that this reappearance of the *Jingjiao* documents opens new possibilities for research, we take this opportunity to report briefly on this "historical" event against the background of past research and to review the few studies that have appeared so far.[11]

III.

The four *Jingjiao* manuscripts described and reproduced with clear color pictures in the Kyōu shooku catalogue volumes are the following (according to the number and the title by which they are included in the catalogue):

(No. 13) *Zhixuan anle jing* 志玄安樂經.[12] One scroll 26.2 cm high, 282.7 cm long, of five dull-brown rough-paper sheets. Chinese characters in the *kaishu* 楷書 (regular) style. Five seals, all of them indicating that the manuscript belonged to Li Shengduo's collection: two below the initial title on the first sheet (木齋 / 眞賞 and 李 / 滂), two below the end title on the last sheet (木齋 / 審定 and 麐嘉 / 館印), one below the final annotation (李盛鐸印).[13] The final annotation reads: 丙辰秋日、于君歸自肅州、以此見詒、盛鐸記, "Acquired from a gentleman from Suzhou on an autumn day of the Bingchen year [1916]—recorded by [Li] Shengduo." The first sheet is badly damaged and shows some incomplete columns. The authenticity of this manuscript has never been doubted. Photographs of the first and the last sheet of this manuscript were

8 See Chen Tao 2010a and Zheng 2013, 121.

9 See Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009.

10 See Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013.

11 For a survey of the history of research on these documents, see Nicolini-Zani 2006 and Lin 2001b.

12 Description in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009, 7; description and photographs in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. I (2009), 128-133. Photographs then reproduced in Lin 2011b, 511-516.

13 See Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. I (2009), 128; Iwamoto 2013, 139-145. Iwamoto is of the view that some of the multiple seals found on many of the manuscripts in Li Shengduo's collection were placed by him when he wanted to show them to other scholars and that others were added later by his son Li Pang when he began planning to sell the collection. Muzhai 木齋 and Linjia 麐嘉 were Li Shengduo's *hao* 号[Art name/pen name].

published in the posthumous collection of Haneda's works in 1958.[14] An accurate transcription of its text (much more accurate than that published by Saeki in 1934)[15] was made by the same Haneda already in 1929.[16] Now, with the originals available, it has been possible for Lin Wushu to revise Haneda's transcription and to produce a new (punctuated) transcription.[17]

(No. 431) ***Da Qin jingjiao xuanyuan benjing*** 大秦景教宣元本經.[18] One 26.5 cm high, 47.7 cm long sheet left of a longer golden-oak rice-paper scroll. Chinese characters in the *xingshu* 行書 (cursive) style. Five seals are stamped on it in the area surrounding the title and all refer to Li Shengduo's collection: 敦煌 / 石室 / 秘笈, 木齋 / 眞賞, 李盛鐸印, 李 / 滂, and 兩晉六朝 / 三唐五代 / 妙墨之軒).[19]

character *min* 民 lacks a stroke since it was a taboo character" during the Tang dynasty.[20] A photograph of this manuscript was published in the posthumous collection of Haneda's works in 1958.[21] From this picture in 1995 Lin Wushu published the first complete transcription of this text.[22] Until then we had only the transcription of the first ten columns, first published by Saeki in 1934 and based on a transcription made by Chen Yuan in 1930 from the original.[23]

(No. 459) ***Xuting mishisuo jing yijuan*** 序聽迷詩所經一卷.[24] One scroll 26.3 cm high, 276.8 cm long, of eight golden-oak high-quality hemp-paper sheets. There are no seals. Together with the "Tomioka manuscript" (No. 460 below), it was reproduced xylographically in the 1931 edition published by the Kyoto Institute of the Academy of Oriental Culture (東方文化學院京都研究所) with an introduction by Haneda.[25] The same Haneda provided a first transcription of this text in 1926.[26]

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[14] See Haneda 1958, fig. 6.

[15] See Saeki 1934a. See also Lin 2001a.

[16] See Haneda 1929, 6-12 (repr. 1958, 274-280).

[17] See Lin 2011a, 314-321.

[18] Description in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009, 149-150; description and photographs in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. V (2011), 396-397. Photographs then reproduced in Lin 2011b, 510.

[19] See Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. V (2011), 396; Iwamoto 2013, 140, 141, 143.

[20] Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. V (2011), 396.

[21] See Haneda 1958, fig. 7.

[22] See Lin 1995.

[23] See Saeki 1934b.

[24] Description in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009, 161; description and photographs in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. VI (2012), 83-87.

[25] See Tōhō bunka gakuin Kyōto kenkyūsho (ed.) 1931. Reproductions published then in Lin 2003, 286-340.

[26] See Haneda 1926, 120-125 (repr. 1958, 242-248).

(No. 460) *Yishen lun juan disan* 一神論卷第三.[27] One scroll 25.4 cm high, 640 cm long, of sixteen golden-oak high-quality hemp-paper sheets. Chinese characters in the *kaishu* (regular) style. No seals. The manuscript has no initial title, but only a final title (一神論卷第三), which traditionally gives the name to the whole manuscript. It includes three tracts with no clear relation between them:

(a) *Yu di'er* 喻第二

(b) *Yitian lun diyi* 一天論第一

(c) *Shizun bushi lun disan* 世尊布施論第三.

IV.

As already mentioned above, these four documents are part of the *Tonkō hikyū*, the "Dunhuang secret collection", which includes 758 manuscripts mostly collected between the years 1936 and 1941 by Haneda Tōru, the outstanding Orientalist, professor, and president (1938–1945) of the Kyoto Imperial University, with the financial assistance of Takeda Chōbei V 五代武田長兵衛 (1870–1959). *Tonkō hikyū* is the fifth most important collection of Dunhuang manuscripts in the world in terms of the numbers of manuscripts, after those in Beijing (Zhongguo guojia tushuguan 中国国家图书馆), London (British Library), Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France), and St Petersburg (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts).[28]

As can be gathered from earlier catalogues,[29] as well as from the seals stamped on the manuscripts themselves, the nucleus (nos. 1–432) of the *Tonkō hikyū* collection at Kyōu shooku today was constituted by the manuscripts which were once owned by the Chinese collector Li Shengduo and which were purchased from his son Li Pang 李滂 by Haneda in 1935–1936.[30] This nucleus was then augmented through the acquisition of further manuscripts, including those which had earlier belonged to the private collections of other Japanese scholars, such as Kiyono Kenji 清野謙次 (1885–1955, nos. 551–590),[31] Tomioka Kenzō 富岡謙蔵 (1873–1918, nos. 460, 501–550), and Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945, no. 459).[32] Haneda had also made photographs of a significant

[27] Description in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009, 161-162; description and photographs in Kyōu shooku (ed.) 2009-2013, Vol. VI (2012), 88-96.

[28] For the nature and the history of the collection, see Iwamoto 2010 and Zheng 2013, on which we base our outline.

[29] Besides the catalogues made while the manuscripts were still in the possession of Li Shengduo, there is a handwritten catalogue by Haneda bearing the title *Tonkō hikyū mokuroku* 敦煌秘笈目録, which reportedly indicates the circumstances of the acquisition of each manuscript (see Ochiai 2001, 2004a, 2004b; cf. Iwamoto 2010, 56 and 2013, 130), but this last remains inaccessible to the wider scholarly world.

[30] See Chen Tao 2010b; Takata 2004, 2007, 2008; Iwamoto 2010 and 2013.

[31] See Takata 2006.

[32] See Iwamoto 2010, 55, 74-81, and Iwamoto 2013, 130-131.

portion of the manuscripts in the *Tonkō hikyū*, probably when they were brought to Japan. The collection of these and other photographs of documents from the Western Regions of China made by Haneda (*Saiiki shutsudo bunken shashin* 西域出土文献写真) is now deposited at the Center for Eurasian Cultural Studies (Haneda Memorial Hall) at Kyoto University.[33]

As regards to the manuscripts Nos. 13 and 431 in the list above, a note on the manuscript itself reveals that No. 13 was bought by Li Shengduo from a gentleman from Suzhou (Gansu) in 1916. As was stated above, the discovery of the Luoyang pillar has shown that the *text* contained in No. 431 is a genuine *Jingjiao* document. While this still does not necessarily prove that the *manuscript* is from Dunhuang, we know that both manuscripts Nos. 13 and 431 were noted in Li Shengduo's collection and appreciated as precious treasures from Dunhuang already in 1919 by Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866–1940).[34] Their existence was known to Kang Fu 抗父 (Fan Bingqing 樊炳清, 1877–1929) in 1922[35] and to Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880–1971) in 1924.[36] On October 7, 1928 Haneda had the chance to see manuscript No. 13 in Li's house in Tianjin but not No. 431 because this one was stored in Shanghai at that time.[37] In 1935 the two manuscripts were sold to Japan together with other manuscripts of Li's collection.[38]

Unfortunately, as regards to manuscripts that Haneda acquired from Japanese private collections, such as the *Jingjiao* manuscripts Nos. 459 and No. 460, the recently published *Tonkō hikyū* catalogue does not indicate their origins and the hands they passed through before becoming part of the *Tonkō hikyū*. What we do know is that No. 459 was bought by Professor Takakusu of the Tokyo Imperial University from a Chinese man some time before 1925;[39] Saeki gives the year of acquisition by Takakusu as 1923 in his Japanese work *Keikyō no kenkyū* 景教の研究 and as 1922 in his *Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*; we do not know on what basis.[40] Its existence was known to Chen Yuan in 1930, when he praised the beauty of its writing style.[41] At the moment of its publication in 1926, Haneda wrote something that has to be verified by examining the originals, now that they have become accessible:

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33 See ZHANG Nali 2006 and 2010; cf. IWAMOTO 2010, 56, 59-60.

34 See WANG-XIAO (eds.) 2000, 470.

35 See KANG 1922, 36.

36 See CHEN Yuan 1924 (repr. 1980, 84-85).

37 See HANEDA 1929, 2 (repr. 1958, 271).

38 For an overview of the transmission of the manuscript *Zhixuan anle jing*, see CHEN Tao 2012.

39 See HANEDA 1926, 117 (repr. 1958, 240); LIN 2001b, 276.

40 See Saeki 1935, 672; Saeki 1937 (1951²), 115.

41 See CHEN Yuan 1930 (repr. 1980, 98).

> One hundred and seventy columns of writing remain in the manuscript, there being a blank of seven columns at the end. At first glance the manuscript seems complete, but actually this blank space is made of paper that had been cut out from the opening part of the manuscript and then pasted here; this blank, therefore, was not there from the beginning. Professor Takakusu was told by the man from whom he acquired [the manuscript] that after the one hundred and seventieth column a certain number of other columns followed, but, since they were extremely damaged, they were cut and thrown away and then substituted by blank columns from the opening part of the manuscript. It is hard to believe, however, that the scroll was almost perfect until its final part, and only at that point damage began to show. I suspect that what happened is that, since the following part of the text was very long, the manuscript was cut and divided into two or more scrolls that were sold to different people, as it frequently happens. It is not impossible that the parts that followed this remnant of the manuscript will one day again see the light of day.[42]

In the case of the Takakusu document, Professor Lin has recently demonstrated that the claim that this manuscript comes from Dunhuang is not supported by the facts. He also pointed out the evident contradiction between the external appearance of the scroll (very regular and with particularly refined handwriting) and the style and contents of its text. On the basis of a careful analysis of the characters that make up the title and of those used in the text, such as the phonetic translations of Jesus' name, he came to the conclusion that the manuscript could not be the work of a Christian believer.[43] Professor Lin's thesis is therefore that "perhaps at the beginning there was one ancient *Jingjiao* manuscript that came from an [unknown] owner, but, because it was too damaged, the owner, being afraid that he would not be able to sell it for a high price, copied it, thus creating a new work on the basis of the original manuscript. As the new manuscript was created for the purpose of making money and not that of spreading the faith, it was naturally written according to criteria of external beauty alone, and attention was not given to mistakes and lacunas in the text and content; moreover, expressing as it does the author's personal taste, it freely distorts the style of the text and the words. The result is a forgery, with an extremely beautiful external appearance but an almost illogical content."[44]

Manuscript No. 460 was bought by Professor Tomioka of the Kyoto Imperial University in 1917, and Haneda in 1918 was the first to describe it, saying that "the original document comes from one of the grottoes of the Thousand Buddhas in Dunhuang, which supplied Aurel Stein of Britain and Paul Pelliot of

42 Haneda 1926, 118 (repr. 1958, 241).
43 See Lin 2001c, 151.
44 Lin 2001c, 152.

France with other innumerable precious texts. Through the hands of a bookseller it has come to adorn the bookshelves of the fortunate Mr. Tomioka together with several dozen volumes of Buddhist documents."[45] Its existence was known to Kang Fu in 1922[46] and to Chen Yuan in 1924.[47] In 1936 Fang Hao reported that the manuscript was kept in the collection of Tomioka Kenzō's descendant Tomioka Masutarō 富岡益太郎.[48] As with manuscript No. 459, so with regard to the Tomioka document also, Lin Wushu has recently reminded us that until the present there has been no documentary evidence to prove that it came from Dunhuang. Lin also wrote that "every mistake in the text [...], including wrongly written characters, confusion in the order of the parts, inconsistency between the title and contents, etc. lead us to suspect that the whole document was compiled by a non-Christian who collated transcriptions based on confused texts, and that the document was not actually produced as holy scripture. Nevertheless, the external appearance of the document is so beautiful and regular, and the handwriting is so accurate and precise that we are led to think that it was composed with the devotion and the piety peculiar to religious faith."[49] On this basis, Lin Wushu developed the following thesis:

> The Tomioka document is not an authentic work from Dunhuang, but a transcription made in the twentieth century; nevertheless, it is not a complete forgery, but is based on an ancient original manuscript. [...] It is probable that among the Dunhuang documents discovered in those years there were, in addition to the well known *Jingjiao* manuscripts, some other *Jingjiao* documents, whose content was similar to that of the *Yishen lun*. These probably ended up in the hands of antique dealers. As they were too damaged for people at that time to recognise their real value, copies were made by the skilful hands of a forger. It is likely that the Tomioka document is one of the masterpieces of these skilful hands, [...] a "refined forgery."[50]

Thanks to the unexpected accessibility of the documents in Osaka these and other hypotheses can at last be put to the test through technical examinations of the original manuscripts by experts.

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45 Haneda 1918, 141-142 (repr. 1958, 236).
46 See Kang 1922, 36.
47 See Chen Yuan 1924 (repr. 1980, 84-85).
48 See Fang 1936, 121.
49 Lin 2000, 81.
50 Lin 2000, 81. On Lin Wushu's view about the authenticity of manuscripts Nos. 459 and 460, see also Lin 2005a.

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Critical Remarks on a So-Called Newly Discovered *Jingjiao* Epitaph from Luoyang With a Preliminary English Translation

Li TANG
University of Salzburg, Austria

1. Epitaph Dedicated to Hua Xian

In 2014, the Chinese journal *Xiyu Yanjiu* 西域研究 published an article by Mao Yangguang 毛阳光 on two newly discovered Tang-dynasty epitaphs dedicated to Hua Xian 花獻 and his wife Madame An 安 (i.e. An Shi 安氏)[1], respectively, who were allegedly Jingjiao/"Nestorian" Christians from Luoyang during the 9th century. In his article, Mao provides a text of both funeral inscriptions as well photos of their rubbings.

According to Mao, these two rubbings of the epitaphs were made from two respective buried tablets (Muzhi 墓誌) unearthed in the eastern suburb of Luoyang 洛陽 in 2010. Mao said that he himself had seen the original tablets and has the original rubbings as well. Meanwhile, he also mentioned, while collecting other Tang dynasty buried tablets, he came across photos of the rubbings of the couple's epitaphs in a published book which contains many funeral inscriptions for married couples unearthed in Luoyang, but, according to Mao, the photos of the rubbings in this collection are in low quality and the readings of some of the Chinese characters in the inscription are incorrect.[2] However, the epitaphic text reproduced by Mao Yangguang in his article does not keep its original notation. The traditional Chinese characters 繁體字 were converted into modern simplified ones 简体字. The original burial tablets are supposed to be kept in the Luoyang Museum for Epitaph Rubbings 洛阳碑志拓片博物馆 according to the report, however, this is not the case. They are not found there or the collectors in this private museum are reluctant to exhibit them for one reason or another, thus causing a great suspicion.

2. Questions on the Authenticity of the So-called *Jingjiao* Epitaph

On the one hand, the absence or disappearance of the original tablets has cast doubt among scholars in China on the genuineness of these stones. On the

1 See MAO 2014 in *Xiyu Yanjiu*.
2 cf. GUO-ZHAO 2012. See MAO 2014, 85.

other hand, many have taken them for granted that they are newly discovered Jingjiao relics from Luoyang. Such being the case, it is necessary to give an introduction to these epitaphs (esp. the Epitaph of Hua Xian) as well as some critical remarks on the "rubbing" based on the materials and information available.

3. Description of Buried Tablets of Hua Xia and His Wife

The first buried tablet (Muzhi) is a 53 x 53 cm square-shaped stone dedicated to Hua Xian. It contains an inscription (Fig. 1) in traditional regular script (kaishu style 楷書). The tablet has a protective cover called Zhi Gai 誌蓋 (Fig. 2) engraved with nine Chinese characters in seal script (zhuanshu style 篆書).[3]

Fig. 1. Rubbing of Hua Xian's epitaph

3 Photos in this article by courtesy of Zhang Naizhu.

Fig. 2 : Protective Cover
This is the title of the inscription called "Ti 題" engraved on the protective cover of Hua Xian's buried tablet. It reads: "唐故花府君公墓誌銘" - Epitaph of the late lord of Hua family of the Tang Dynasty

The second is the buried tablet of Madam An, wife of Hua Xian. It is a 30 x 28 cm square-shaped stone, engraved with an epitaph (Fig. 3). It also has a protective cover (Fig. 4) with nine Chinese characters reading: 大唐故夫人安氏墓誌 (Epitaph of the deceased Madam An of the Great Tang Dynasty).

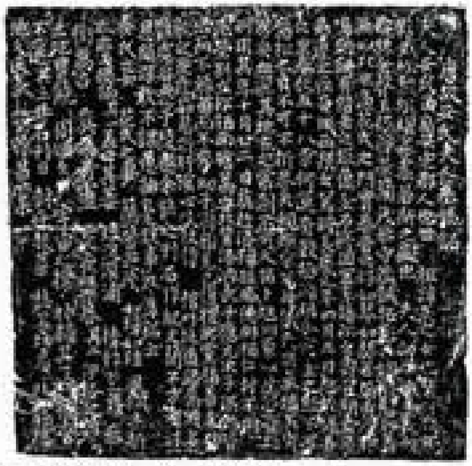

Fig. 3. Epitaph of Madam An

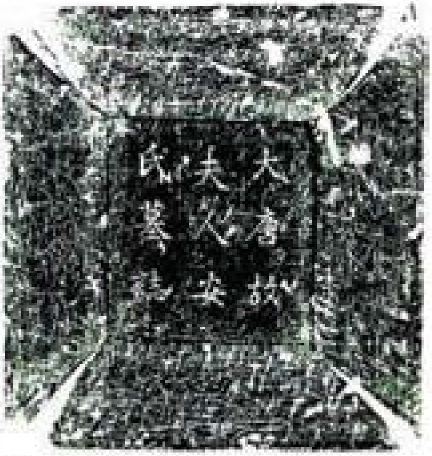

Fig. 4. The Protective Cover

4. The Deceased

4.1. Hua Xian

According to the inscription, the deceased is called HUA Xian originally from Lingwu County. He once held a lower than 8th grade (*pin* 品) position under the Nine-Grade system for civil or military officials during the Tang Dynasty. He died in AD 827 at his own house at Xiushanli in the Henan County at the age of 71. His funeral inscription says that he practiced the "eight principles of Jing 八景", which could indicate a connection to Jingjiao?

4.2. Madam An
Both tablets mentioned Madam An, the wife Hua Xian. She came from Anding Prefecture 安定郡 (within the area of present day Ningxia and Gansu) and died earlier than her husband in her own place in Luoyang at the age of 57. Her surname "An" gives hint that she was most probably of Sogdian origin. However, neither of the epitaphs clearly indicates that she was a "Nestorian" Christian.

4.3. The Writer of the Funeral Inscriptions
Both epitaphs of Hua Xian and his wife were written by Wen Jian 文簡, Shamen (Śramaṇa) of the Buddhist Shengshan Monastery in Luoyang. The year of writing is not indicated, but can be assumed to be AD 828 when the joint burial ceremony was performed. Wen Jian, a Buddhist, seems to have known the couple well, but this does not imply that the deceased couple was also Buddhist. During the Tang Dynasty, people tended to invite famous literati to compose epitaphs.

4.4. Dating
Hua Xian's epitaph bears no dating as to when it was inscribed. The only information mentioned in the epitaph is the date when Hua Xian was re-buried by the grave of his late wife and a joint burial ceremony was performed, i.e. AD 828. It can be assumed that this could serve as the date of the epitaph.

5. The Epitaph: Text, English Translation and Commentary

Apparatus criticus:

1. A solid black square ■ indicates a reverence mark, i.e. an empty character place in the inscription, left empty before the name of an emperor or a sanctified deceased
2. An empty square □ indicates an illegible Chinese character in the inscription
3. [景] A character in a frame indicates a variant reading of the word in the frame by the present author.
4. Words in square brackets [ ] are reconstructed English translation

<u>Text with Literary Translation (Fig 1)</u>:

5.1. Title of the Epitaph of Hua Xian
The inscription is written vertically and from right to the left. The title reads:

<u>Column 01</u>:
唐故左武衛兵曹參軍上騎都尉
The late senior Commander-in-Chief of Cavalry[4] for the prefecture military

[4] 上騎都尉 (shangqi duwei): Senior Commander-in-Chief of Cavalry

service section[5] of the Left [Palace] Guard of the Tang Dynasty

Column 02:
靈武郡花府君公神道志銘
God-way[6] (Sideway) Funeral inscription of Lord Hua from the Lingwu County

5.2. Author of the Epitaph
The content of the epitaph was written Wen Jian, Shamen (Śramaṇa) from the Shengshan Buddhist Monastery in Luoyang:

Column 03:
洛陽聖善寺沙門文簡撰
Written by Wen Jian, Shamen (Śramaṇa) of the Shengshan[7] Monastery in Luoyang

5.3. The Narrative Part of the Inscription "Xu" 序

Column 04
公諱獻, 字獻, 靈武郡人也．祖諱■[8] 移恕, 考諱■[9]蘇鄰．咸嗜道偃仰[10]，浪心清閒
The Lord is named[11] Xian, [with] courtesy name Xian, coming from the county of Lingwu. His [paternal] grandfather is named Yishu, his late father is named Sulin. [He] enjoyed all kinds of easy life-styles and had a free heart for an idle life,

Column 05
以榮名為怯風之花，逍遙為紺霜之竹．而乃高尚無屈仕焉．延及■■府君
regarding honor and fame as the flowers fearful of wind and free leisure as bamboos in rosy-glow[12] frost . Yet [he was] a noble-minded and unyielding

5 兵曹參軍 (bingcao canjun): a prefecture level military service section during the Tang Dynasty.
6 神道 (shendao): literarily God-way; it is the sideway by the grave.
7 Literarily: Monastery of Holiness and Goodness
8 Here exists one character empty space, which is a reverence mark employed in ancient Chinese texts before the names of emperors or the sanctified deceased. Normally in ancient text, before a respectable person's name such as that of the emperor or sanctified deceased, one character space is left empty.
9 One reverence mark
10 偃仰 (yan yang). Here it means "being content in an easy life"
11 Here the word 諱 (hui) is an honorific designation for an emperor or a noble person.
12 紺霜=甘霜: frost under the morning rosy glow. 紺 (gan) is dark blue with red shade.

officer, indeed. As for being in his own home, he [you[13]]

Column 06

纂延素風, 有位而不登. 棄祿養和, 不爭名於■朝, 澄心履道, 客[14] 隱逸於市布

focused on keeping the ethos of simplicity, ascending to no existing official positions. He renounced handsome salary and cultivated harmony, contending for no fame at the [imperial[15]] court. [He] followed his way pure-heartedly. As a stranger, he hid himself[16] in the cloth market.[17]

Column 07

人信于戚屬者, ■公不顧險艱, 迎孀姊于砂塞之外, 侍之中堂, 聚食歡笑. 累

Obtaining trust from his relatives, he [lord Hua], disregarding danger and hardship, went to the outskirts of the desert[18] to marry[19] the sister of his late wife there. He attended her at his own house. They dined together and laughed heartily.

Column 08

歲傾歿, 祔葬■先塋, 哭泣過制, 人皆嗟焉. 敷言行於朋從, 守直道以度時. 不

Weariness and old age led to [her] death. While wrapping her body and burying her in her ancestral grave, he wept excessively. All lamented! He put his words into action among friends and kept the righteous way in his life.[20] [He did] not

Column 09

邪諂以矯媚, 是以義聲溢於天下, 孝致盈於縉紳, 常洗心, 事■景尊, 竭奉教

indulge in evil slander to pretend to be enchanting, instead [he] allowed the sound of righteousness to spread in the world. [His] filial piety was fully ex-

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13 君 (jun): a nobleman/gentleman; also an honorific form of the personal pronoun "you". In the above translation text, "he" is used in order to follow the consistency of the subject in the paragraph.

14 In Mao's text, it is 嘗.

15 Before the word 朝 (chao), there is a reverence mark. 朝 (chao) may refers to the Tang court.

16 隱逸 (yinyi): withdrew oneself from the society.

17 Here my punctuation is different from that of Mao Yangguang. I put 市布(shibu) together as one term, meaning "buying piece goods or cloth".

18 The desert should be the Gobi Desert.

19 Here 迎 (ying), welcome, should mean 迎娶 (yingqu), i.e. to marry. After his wife passed away, Hua Xian went to the Gobi desert area and married his wife's sister.

20 Here 度時 (dushi) literally means "passing one's time".

tended to [retired] government officials.[21] He always purified his heart and served the Lord of *Jing[jiao]*.[22] He strived to follow his religious

Column 10

理. 為法中之柱礎, 作徒侶之笙簧. 而內修八景, 外備三常, 將證無元, 永祇万

principles and regarded them as the pillar foundation among all laws. He was the music instrument of his follower believers.[23] Yet, inwardly he practiced eight principles of *Jing[jiao];*[24] outwardly he possessed the three constant virtues.[25] Bearing witness to No Origin[26] and perpetually resisting all

Column 11

慮. 於戲, 日居月諸, 否來泰往. 忽遘微疾, 未越一旬, 有加無瘳, 色沮神淬. 名[27]醫

worries. Alas![28] Time flies![29] The evil comes and the good goes. Suddenly he encountered a mild illness, which, less than a decade, grew worse and became incurable. His complexion turned gloomy[30] and his spirit (shen) became broken.[31] A famous doctor

Column 12

上藥, 拱手無所施. 方知利劍[32]先缺, 甘泉光[33]竭, 乾[34]道變衰, 而精魂歸乎

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21 縉紳 (jinshen): refers to those officials or those who once held official positions.

22 景尊 (jing zun), a term used in other Chinese Jingjiao texts to refer to Christ. Cf. Xi'an Fu inscription, line 6.

23 笙 (sheng): a type of reed instrument; 簧 (huang): reed. These two words put together refer generally to music instruments.

24 In the Xi'anfu inscription (Line 7), it mentions 八境 (ba jing)

25 三常 (san chang) is also mentioned in the Xi'anfu inscription (Line 7), taken as or translated by most scholars as the three Christian virtues Faith, Hope and Love.

26 無元 (wu yuan): No Origin, a term also employed in the Xi'anfu inscription. Cf. Line 26 of Xi'anfu Inscription.

27 The word "召 (zhao)" as reproduced by Mao Yangguang looks like "名 (ming)" from the photo of the rubbing the present author received. However, it does not affect the content very much. 召醫 (zhao yi): to call a doctor; 名醫 (ming yi): a famous doctor.

28 於戲 (wuhu)=嗚呼 (wuhu): alas.

29 日居月諸 (ri ju yue zhi): literarily means "time flies". The phrase comes from Book of Songs 《诗·邶风·柏舟》："日居月诸，胡迭而微"。

30 色沮 (se zu): according to the diagnose method in traditional Chinese medicine, the first step is to look at the complexion or facial color of the person, which can help determine the illness. When the facial color becomes gloomy, it is a sign of a sick person.

31 淬 (cui) describes a process when a burning metal was dipped into cold water. Here it implies when one's spirit goes through this process, it became broken.

32 In the rubbing's photo, the word is 劒 instead of 劍, as Mao suggests. However, they are the two variants for the same character "sword".

33 Different reading of the character from the rubbing. The present author reads it as 光 instead of 先 in Mao's reading.

北斗。以

and superior medicine found no way to save him.[35] It came to be known that the sharp sword first lost its sharpness; the sweet spring dried out; his back-bones grew weakened; but his soul returned to the Big Dipper.[36]

Column 13

寶曆三年正月八日終於河南縣修善裡之私第，享年七十一。夫人安定郡

On the eighth day of the first moon of the third year of Baoli (AD827), he died at his private residence in the quarter of Xiushan Li[37] of the Henan County at the age of 71. His wife from the Anding County

Column 14

安氏，明潔宣慈，酌仁怡愉。好音韻，為絲竹，宮唱商和，禮翔樂優。以溫恭而成

had “An” as her Columnage name. She was pure, noble and kind,[38] considering benevolence as joy. Talented in music and rhythm, she was a musician of stringed and woodwind instruments[39] and sang ancient [Chinese] music,[40] with fully accurate rituals and fine music.[41] She regarded gentleness and respectfulness as

Column 15

妝，非粉黛為顏色。故穰穰百福，蓁蓁成陰。坤儀禍生，先歸泉戶，以長慶元年

her adornment; applied no maquillage for her complexion,[42] thus receiving a harvest of blessings like shade cast by leafy trees. Illness afflicted her graceful appearance and she departed to the netherworld first [ahead of her husband]. In the first year of Changqing

34 Cf. Mao’s reproduction of the word is “軤”.

35 拱手 (gong shou): making an obeisance by cupping one hand in the other before one’s chest. Here it means there is no way out but to give up.

36 According ancient Chinese astrology and divination, after a person (esp. an emperor) dies, his soul returns to the Big Dipper. Here in the given text, it may just be an expression that a person has died.

37 修善里(Xiushan Li). Mao refers to as 修善坊 (Xiushan Fang) in the southern part of Luoyang, where a Persian Hu Temple should have been located.

38 宣慈 (xuanci): benevolent and kind. The term can trace back to *Zuozhuan* 《左传·文公十八年》:“ 高辛氏 有才子八人……忠肃共懿,宣慈惠和…

39 絲竹 (sizhu): referring to traditional stringed and woodwind instruments.

40 宮唱商和 (gongchang shanghe): these are modes of ancient Chinese music/opera.

41 禮翔樂優 (li xiang yue you): here 禮 (li) and 樂 (yue) go together as 禮樂(Liyue), a system of ritual and music established during the Zhou Dynasty. 翔 (xiang) = 翔實 (xiangshi).

42 粉黛 (fen dai): painting the eyebrows with a black pigment by women in ancient times.

Column 16

夏四月五日終於舊里。孕子三人，長曰應元，次曰滿師。皆為人傑，不及時祿，

in the summer month of April, she died in her hometown. She gave birth to three children: the oldest son is called Yingyuan, the second son Manshi; both are outstanding personalities who are not after handsome salaries,

Column 17

芳而不榮，具在前誌。季子齊雅，行操松筠，為席之珍。招賢納士，響慕從風，江

reputable but glorious and having the aspiration of their forefathers. The third son is Qiya whose moral conduct is as faithful as pines and bamboos[43] and who is like a delicacy on the banquet table. [When the court] invited men of wisdom and valor, he [Qiya?] responded with admiration and followed the practice.

Column 18

海之心，罕議儔疋。[44] 泣血絕漿，有終天之恨，哭無常聲，毀形過制。龜兆從吉，即

Such a heart as big as river and sea is extraordinaire and unrivalled. Weep until eyes bleed[45] and fast from drinking, for this is the deepest regret in life. Cry without a usual sound until [our] figure be ruined [through grief][46] und the omen complies with luck.[47]

Column 19

以大和二年二月十六日歸葬於洛陽縣感德鄉柏仁村，啟■夫人故墳，禮

On this day, that is the 16th day of the second moon of the second year of the Dahe era (AD 828), he [Lord Hua] was re-buried at the Bairen Village of the Gande countryside in Luoyang County. His late wife's tomb was opened. A funeral ceremony was performed

Column 20

及合祔。則龍劍合於下泉，琴瑟永沉蒿裡。終天之義，從古如斯。南顧萬安，

[43] 松筠 (song yun): pine and bamboo imply a faithful character.

[44] 疋＝匹

[45] 泣血 (qi xue): literarily it means "weeping until blood comes out of one's eyes". It implies having a great sorrow or mourning.

[46] 毀形 (hui xing): ruin one's figure. This is a literal way of expressing grief.

[47] 龜兆 (gui zhao): in ancient Chinese divination, a diviner foretells a good or an ill omen by seeing the cracks on a tortoise shell after it is being heated.

so that two of them could be buried together.[48] That is to say, the dragon sword[49] was buried together him in the nether world; and the lute and psaltery[50] were laid buried in [her] grave.[51] This has been the righteousness of all one's life from time immemorial down to the present day. Turning southward towards the Wanan [Mountain];

Column 21
北背洛涘．左瞻少室孤峰，右占土圭之墅．文簡久承顧眄，眷撫情逾，邀志之．性
with my back facing the Luo River;[52] looking up to the left at the isolated Shaoshi peak, on the right, it is the area occupied by the house of sundial. I, Wenjian,[53] being perpetually indebted for their concern and thinking fondly of their overwhelming care, have been invited to write an epitaph. Yet, having a character

Column 22
多拙直，恐敘事不精，握管抽毫，記刻貞石，用虞陵穀之變．其詞曰:
that is slow and direct, I fear that I may fail to recount proficiently. Holding my writing brush, I write [this epitaph]. Let it be inscribed on the funeral stone[54] before time brings great changes to the mountains and valleys.[55] The words are as follows:

5.4. The Euologistic Part of the Inscription "ming" 銘

Column 23
靈武之氏，代不乏賢．謐物化洽，焉[56]時為天．蹇其葉草，松明竹鮮．
In the family of Lingwu, there is no lack of virtuous persons in every generation. Calming the nature and transforming harmony; regarding

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48 祔 (fu): the cloth used from wrapping the body. 合祔 (he fu): a joint burial; be buried together.

49 龍劍 (long jian): a short form of 龍淵劍 (long yuan jian), one of the famous swords in ancient China. During the Tang dynasty, since yuan is the name of the first Tang emperor 李淵 (Li Yuan), it was tabooed. Instead, one used 泉 (quan) which carries the same meaning as Yuan (i.e. deep spring), thus 龍泉劍 (long quan jian). Since Hua Xian served in the military capacity of the Tang Dynasty, this sword was his funeral object.

50 琴瑟 (qin se): two kinds of stringed instrument. This corresponds to the musical instruments played by Madam An. The instruments were buried together with her.

51 蒿裡 (hao li): originally the name of a mountain which was believed to be located in the southern side of Taishan Mountain. It was a burial place.

52 洛涘 (luoyi) is namely 洛水 (luoshui), the Luo River.

53 The author of the funeral inscription.

54 貞 (zhen): originally means "divination" in ancient times. Here 貞石(zhen shi) refers to the funeral stone.

55 陵 (ling): hill; 穀 (gu): valley. 陵穀之變 means the change in which mountains have become valleys and vice versa. Here it implies the changes that time brings to the world.

56 In Mao Yangguang's reading, it is 与. In the inscription, the word looks more like 焉.

season as heaven just like leaves and grass,[57] or bright pines and fresh bamboos

Column 24

劍合重泉，琴瑟初掩．永殄笙簧，世歿餘念．景寺遺聲，芳塵罷占．

[His] sword was placed in his grave; her lute and psaltery were first buried [with her]. [What] an ever extinguished Sheng music[58]! Should the world perish, memories of them will remain. The music from the Jing [jiao] temple is being handed down. The earth is covered with the scent of their footsteps.[59]

Column 25

峨峨淑德，克生休命。履義蹈忠，含清體正。如玉之潔，如金之鏡。

His virtues are high and kind; Restricting his own self and sacrificing his life, he followed the path of righteousness and adhered to his loyalty. He cherished his purity and maintained his uprightness, as pure as jade and as shining as gold.

Column 26

三光西沒，百川東度。天道運回，人隨代故。倏忽嗟歎，淒涼薤露.

The three light bodies (The Sun, the moon and the stars) set down in the west, hundreds of rivers flow eastward [to the sea]. The way of heaven[60] moves around. Generation follows generation. Sighs and cheers do not last; the dews on the onion leaves look dreary.

Column 27

安氏夫人，祔葬終也．水合蛟龍，墳同松檟．千載九原，嗣子淚下．

Madam An was burial here. A recumbent dragon[61] has been united with the water. The grave is the place of pines and catalpas.[62] This shall be a grave[63] for a thousand years. Tears shall be shed by posterity.

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57 Phrase not legible.

58 笙(Sheng): a reed pipe wind instrument.

59 芳塵(fang chen): literarily refers to scented earth. Here it implies footsteps of virtuous persons.

60 天道 (tiandao): literarily it means the way of heaven or natural law

61 蛟龍 (jiao long): a mythical dragon in ancient Chinese mythology, which can cause flooding.

62 松檟 (song jia): pine trees and Chinese catalpa trees (or tea trees). In ancient China, these two kinds of trees were planted around the grave. Thus Songjia is a synonym of grave.

63 九原 (jiuyuan): grave.

6. Critical Remarks

6.1. The Authenticity of the Rubbing Text

There is a great suspicion about genuineness this funeral inscription due to the following reasons:

(1) The original rubbing has disappeared. This is most suspicious.

(2) As I (the present author) was translating the funeral inscription, esp. the eulogistic part at the end, I discovered something unusual: Column 25 with six 4-character phrases of altogether 24 words (i.e. 峨峨淑德，克生休命。履義蹈忠，含清體正。如玉之潔，如金之鏡) is exactly the same as the eulogistic phrases in the funeral inscription of an earlier epitaph of a Tang-Dynasty official from Changzhou (died AD 721), i.e. 常州刺史平君神道碑. Then Column 26 with six 4-character phrases (i.e. 三光西沒，百川東度。天道運回，人隨代故。倏忽嗟歎，淒涼薤露) is taken from the epitaph of another Tang-Dynasty official (died AD 669), i.e. 唐故涼州長史元君石柱銘(並序) except that four words were changed and replaced with synonyms. The second but last phrase was changed from 倏忽三紀 to 倏忽嗟歎; the last phrase from 悲涼千露 to 淒涼薤露.

The two earlier epitaphs of Tang officials were both composed by the same author named Zhang Shuo 張說 (AD 667-730) who was the prime minister under Emperor Tang Xuanzong. Zhang Shuo was a poet and was highly skilled in composing epitaphic texts. His two epitaphs mentioned above are kept in the collection of *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文 vol. 232 and 229, respectively.

There are two possibilities regarding this text resemblance. First the author of Hua Xian's epitaph copied Zhang Shuo's content himself, which can be regarded as plagiarism in ancient times. However, this seems to be unlikely because Hua's family invited a well-respected Buddhist monk of good virtue to compose the epitaphic text. Such an obvious copying from the funeral inscriptions composed by a famous poet would have been regarded as shameful and it would have destroyed the fame of the deceased.

Another possible explanation can be: The Hua Xian's epitaphic text we have is a modern forgery. It could mean that either it is the rubbing of a newly forged inscription or the rubbing comes from the epitaphic text that was re-engraved with some manipulated variations, based on the content of an existing epitaph of Hua Xian, because it does seem possible that there exist the burial tablets of Hua Xian and his wife.

6.2. Connection to *Jingjiao*

The epitaph has been regarded by some Chinese scholars as belonging to a Tang-Chinese Jingjiao Christian due to the following reasons: First, the name of Hua Xian's grandfather is Yishu 移恕 (Column 4) which is phonetically closed to the pronunciation of Jesu. Additionally, there are different variants of Yishu in the Chinese Dunhuang Nestorian Texts as well as in Manichean texts.[64]

Secondly, the epitaph mentions Hua Xian practicing inwardly eight principles of Jing[jiao] 修八景 (ba jing) and outwardly three constant virtues "San Chang 三常" (Column 10). In the Xi'an Fu inscription, one can find the term San Chang (commonly interpreted as Faith, Hope and Love) and eight conditions 八境 which were understood by most scholars as the eight Beatitudes. The so-called Hua Xian's inscription describes that Hua practiced eight [principles of] Jing, but which eight principles are they? Hua's inscription also reads that he served Jing Zun 景尊 (Column 9), a term that was also found in the Dunhuang texts. Other words such as "Wu Yuan" 無元 meaning "No Origins" (Column 10) and "Jing Si 景寺", i.e. Jing Temple, (Column 24) can also be found in the Xi'an Fu inscription.

Even if several words in Hua's epitaph, which can be regarded as showing a connection to Jingjiao, since these words can also be found in the Dunhuang Texts or in the Xi'an Fu inscription, it is still suspicious because unlike the inscription of Luoyang Jingjiao Pillar (discovered in 2005) which provides new information on the Sogdian Christian community in Luoyang during the 9th century as well as displaying Christian cross and angel symbols on the stone, the so-called Hua's epitaph which contains certain *Jingjiao*-related words give the impression that they were easily taken or copied from other extant Jingjiao documents, especially the Xi'an Fu inscription.

In view of all these as discussed above, it is necessary, first and foremost, to have the authenticity of Hua Xian's epitaph verified before any further conclusions are drawn.

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[64] The variant writings for the term Yishu (移鼠, 夷數 etc.) in Chinese Manichean as well as Dunhuang Nestorian Texts can all go back to the Syriac word ܝܫܘܥ

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SYRIAC CROSSES IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST CHINA

The Rev. Fr. Dale Albert JOHNSON

On the "Da Qin Jing Jiao" Monument of Xi'an, formerly referred to as the Nestorian Monument, and hereafter referred to as the Xi'an-Fu Monument, is a reference to the presence of churches in every province of Syriac origin established in Tang Era China. Was this a product of pious imagination or were there churches built in China? If so, where were they located? There has been little archaeological or linguistic evidence of these churches other than the inscription on the stele of Xi'an. Using the Xi'an-Fu stele inscription as a map of clues, the author reports on crosses he has found of Syrian design in southwestern China, a Tang era stone emblem in Northwestern China, and a new epigraphic evidence of a cross through re-examination of the Xi'an-Fu stone.

Fig 1: Author identifies Ciqikou cross, October 1, 2011

Fig 2

Part I

During the Tang Dynasty there were Christian Churches throughout China. Where were they located? We have brief hints from a stone monument erected in 781 C.E. near the capital of Xi'an dedicated to Christianity called Jing Jiao of Syrian origin. It says, *"The religion spread throughout the ten provinces .... monasteries abound in hundred cities."* [115] Unfortunately very little evidence has been found. One hint points to the southwest region of China in the Sichuan province.

Ciqikou 磁器口 is a Chinese village that dates back 3000 years. It was the capital of the ancient Ba Kingdom (316 BCE) that was overthrown by the Qin Dynasty that ruled during the time of Christ. Originally called Longyinzhen, Ciqi-

[115] Xi'an Fu Inscription, Line 16.

kou (simplified Chinese: 龙隐镇; traditional Chinese: 龍隱鎮; pinyin: ***Lóngyǐnzhèn***) was also known as Little Chongqing. It was given its present name by Emperor Zhenzong of the Song Dynasty (r. 998—1004). It gained prominence during the Ming Dynasty as a commercial port of porcelain shipping by land and water.

The Jing Jiao Christian stone erected in 781 AD in Xi'an may give reference to this location during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.) on the monument. On the left side, second row, at the very top is a priest named Bakos. He is from Ch'ung-ching.
According to the Monument, there were prior to A.D. 781 Christians called Jing Jiao of Syrian origin in at least eight towns in China, five of which were situated in the west. According to Fred Aphrem and other scholars, there may even have been a church in every province based on what Rubruck wrote five centuries later to the effect that in his time there were Christians of Middle Eastem origin in at least fifteen towns in China.[116]

We know that in Loyang a Christian Jing Jiao monastery was erected in the Shau-hsien quarter, and there were also monasteries in Tuan-huang [Dunhuang], Ling-wu and in Szechuan. During the reign of Empress Wu, in 690 she proclaimed herself the founder of a new dynasty –Chou [Zhou] - and wished to be memorialized. Accordingly, her half brother, Wu San-Ssu, proposed to erect a gigantic column in her honor, to be located outside the Tuan gate of the Imperial city. It was to be an octagonal column with a height of 105 feet built in a base with carved unicorns. On the pinnacle of the column was to be a dragon embracing a large orb representing the rising sun. The enormous task of financing and erecting the imposing column was entrusted to a Jing Jiao Christian man named Abraham from the Persian Empire, district of Tur Abdin. The project took only eight months to complete.

Although Empress Wu was a Buddhist, Abraham's act of homage must have assured the Empress of the loyalty of the Jing Jiao congregation and thus averted the Buddhist attempt to destroy the Jing Jiao community in Luoyang and to uproot the young church from Chinese soil. The inscription on Abraham's tombstone stated that he brought the holy religion to the barbarian tribes who had since lived in peace and concord. He died on the first day of the fourth month in the first year of Chun Yun (AD 710) at his private residence in Luoyang, aged 95.

In 713 the Emperor Xuan Tzong (r. 712-757) ordered the Prince of Ning Kuo and four other princes to go to the Jing Jiao monastery to build and set up the

[116] APRIM, Fred, The Nestorian Monument in China, http://www.nestorian.org/the_ nestorian_monument_in_chin.html.

altars again. Stonemasons were needed and no doubt many were recruited from the Jingjiao community in Xi'an and many were imported from the Persian west. Certainly Christian iconography was inscribed in stone. Of Bishop Gabriel (Chih-lieh) we obtain valuable information from Chinese sources. It is significant to note that Gabriel came to China by sea. Toward the end of the 7th century, Canton had become the chief seaport for foreign trade. Bishop Gabriel arrived in Canton in 713 or earlier. He worked among Persian merchants and craftsmen and acquired knowledge of Chinese. Gabriel made the acquaintance of the Inspector of merchant shipping, Chou Ching-li. With the encouragement and help of Chou, he began to "carve quaint things and make wonderful objects." It aroused, however, the antagonism of Liu Tse, the Prefect of the Province. He submitted a petition to the Emperor. "Ching-Ii is seeking to beguile your sage understanding, to shake and subvert your lofty mind. Will your Majesty trust and allow it? This would be to spread decadence in the whole Empire!" The Emperor was probably more interested in the stonemason skills of the people under Bishop Gabriel and of Abbot Abraham who seemed to have created a positive atmosphere in Xi'an (Chang-an.)

According to the *Tse Fu Yuan Kuei* 冊府元龜, the second mission of Bishop Gabriel took place in October 732 when the King of Persia sent the chief P'an-na-mi with Bishop Gabriel on an embassy to Chang-an. The Emperor was pleased and gave Gabriel a purple kashaya and fifty pieces of silk. In 744 Bishop George (Chi-ho) a third mission was sent to the Far East. Bishop George was permitted to celebrate the Eucharist in the Palace of the Emperor's elder brother. In October 745 an Imperial decree[117] stated that since the administrative center of Jing Jiao was in Da Qin outside of Xi'an. From here churches and monasteries of the Jing Jiao spread throughout China and no doubt this included Longyinzhen which was to become Ciqikou.

Iconographic Analysis of the Ciqikou Cross

The icon of the cross of Syriac origin has a distinctive design (Fig.1&2). It consists of a cross within a circle touching eight points. Two points on each end of the four ends of the cross touch the inner arch of the circle. Each arm of the cross is narrower near the middle than at the ends. The center of the cross draws to a circle at the center. The cross is created from 12 circles of three sets of four circles. The one in Ciqikou, China, and Aleppo, Syria, follow a perfect quadratic equation. This cross is often mistaken for a Maltese Cross of the 13th c.

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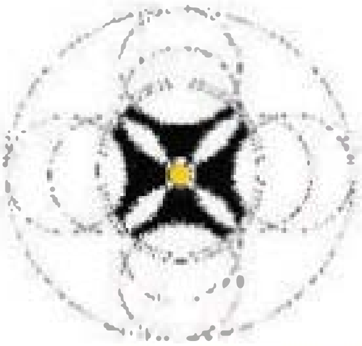
117 See *Tang Huiyao Vol. 9.*



Comparative Evidence

The cross (F3, left) identified by the author in Ciqikou on October 1, 2011 is fundamentally identical to crosses found in Aleppo Syria (6th c.), Tur Abdin, Turkey (8th-9th c.), Iran (? C.), and in the Uigher autonomous region of Northwest China (14th c.). These crosses are scattered along the Silk Road from Syria to China. These crosses date from the 6-14th centuries.

Fig. 4: *9th c. Cross with inscription, Tangtse, dated 825 C.E.*[118].

Fig.5: Kyrgyzstan, *Issyk Kul, dated 1312.*[119]

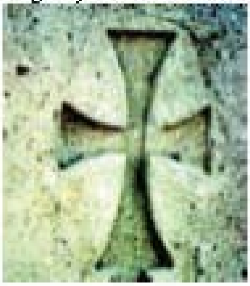


Fig. 6: Hakkari, Turkey, undated Assyrian Cross[120]

Fig. 7: *14th Century, Yuan Dynasty, China*[121]

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[118] Sogdian text & Cross. The inscription on the boulder at Tangtse is still there, though surrounded by more recent graffiti from casual Buddhist travelers. The Sogdian text of the inscription goes as follows: *In the year 210* (Arab calendar, corresponding with 825 AD) *we sent Caitra from Samarkand together with the monk Nosfarn as messengers to the King of Tibet.* Three Nestorian crosses are carved to the left of the Sogdian inscription. If the text and the crosses belong together, which is a tempting and even reasonable presumption, the monk who is called Nosfarn in the inscription may have been a Nestorian messenger.

[119] *Tombstone with inscriptions in Uyghur, found in Issyk Kul, dated 1312 http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/Nestorianism*

[120] *Undated Cross in http://www.skhimna.be/skhimna/content/view/225/1 91/*

[121] *Cross of the Yuan dynasty (replica) unearthed in Beijing from the permanent collection of the Capital Museum. [BGD] from China Heritage Quarterly, The Australian National University, No. 10 June 2007. Located in the Capital Museum (Shoudu Bowuguan), Beijing*

Fig. 8: Aleppo Syria (6-7th c.)[122]

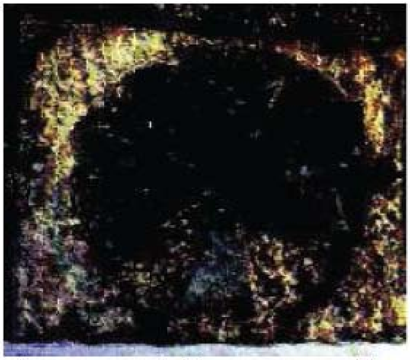
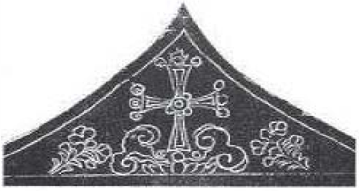


Fig. 9: Mor Gabriel Monastery, Midyat, Turkey (9th c.)[123]

Connection to the Xi'an-Fu Cross



While not identical, the cross known as the Nestorian Cross in Xi'an (left, Fig. 8) is in the same class as the Ciqikou Cross. At the top of the Nestorian stele erected in 781C.E. is a cross seated upon a lotus flower and framed by clouds. Each arm of the cross is wider at the end and narrower toward the center. The sides of the cross are formed from arches of larger circles. On the end of each arm there are three small circles constituting twelve circles. At the nexus points of the arms near the center are four small circles. Each arm is equidistant. Although stylistically this cross differs from the Ciqikou Cross, it is fundamentally the same.

The equidistant cross is of Eastern Origin. The Church of Constantinople was essentially Asian and Eastern. When the Emperor Justinian erected the church of Santa Sophia at Constantinople, with the aid of the architects Artemius of Tralles, and Isidore of Miletus, a new model for all churches was subsequently built throughout the Byzantine Empire and further East. The Greek cross inscribed in a square thus became the typical form. This type of cross followed the Silk Road overland to China.

Collaborating Evidence

The Ciqikou cross was noticed on the main street of Ciqikou. This was not the original location of the cross icon. It was among a mix of stone from different quarries and several eras. Also, this stone bore evidence having been in a verti-

[122] Aleppo, Syria ruin of Saints Peter and Paul, 6th c.

[123] This cross is embedded in a pillar in the Monastery of Mor Gabriel. It in the Yoldath Aloho, wing of the monastery.

cal position for many years previously. The degradation of the stone showed a watermark where water created a groove in one of the corners. In a vertical position water would have worn this groove.

In a survey of the nearby area to determine from where this stone originated within a radius of one hundred yards there were many buildings that possessed a mix of stones from many eras. There was red sandstone of the Qin era, slate flagstone of the Sui and Tang era, and similar flagstone but of smaller sizes from Tang and later periods.

Stone Capital

Civilizations can be identified in particular by their decorated columns supporting structure: whether it is the Ionian or Corinthian capitals of Greece or the seven-layer cross beam capitals of the Tang Dynasty. Two hundred yards further north on the Ciqikou street where the cross is embedded in the street is a stone capital of Syrian design. Today it is used to support weary people at the entrance to a shop.

The intrepid explorer Gertrude Bell documented the stone ruins of Turkey and Iraq in 1907 on one of her several expeditions to the Middle East. She was particularly interested in the stone architecture on the once vast Persian civilization that stretched from Antioch to Xi'an. In the course of her work she made hundreds of photographs of the distinctive stone capitals of Syrian design in the region of Tur Abdin. I followed in her footsteps in the 1990's and visited the many stone ruins she documented.[124]

Fig. 9 *Triple curve Syrian capital*

Fig.10: Ciqikou

[124] All photos were taken by the author except for the one with the author observing the cross. This photo credit is by Xia Pei Xian

Fig. 11 (left) & 12 (right)[125]

Guan Yin Temple Ruin

Christians in China during the Song Dynasty and perhaps before saw the female (formerly minor male) deity Guan Yin as the Virgin Mary in disguise. Rubin Habito of *Perkins School of Theology* at Texas Methodist University and the *Marie Kannon Center* in Dallas Texas has pointed out in one of his many publications on the connection between Asian Christians and Guan Yin that direct archaeological evidence can be dated back to the 10th century. It is not surprising then that evidence of a Christian ruin in southwestern China is found within the vicinity of two Guan Yin temples. One is a 9th century ruin perhaps built on top of the Jing Jiao Christian site and the other is a newer temple, portions of which were built in the 11th century.[126]

How Do We Know This Church Became a Ruin in the 9th Century?

There is not enough evidence yet to definitively determine the *terminus ad quem* of the Christian building in Ciqikou. Non-Christian sources point to the 9th century demise of Christianity from the records of the Song Dynasty. We are told that both Christian and Buddhist institutions were condemned and forced to be abandoned in the 9th century in the year 845 AD. It appears that the Christian community did not return but a Buddhist community did return in celebration and worship of Guan Yin in a later century. The Guan Yin Temple was built in the 11th century. It was built upon the ruin of a Christian church or monastery we surmise from the scattered evidence of stones and signs. We are told that both Christian and Buddhist institutions were condemned and forced to be abandoned in the 9th century in the year 845 C.E. It appears that the Christian community did not return but a Buddhist community did return in celebration and worship of Guan Yin in a later century.

The report of an envoy sent to China by the East Syrian Patriarch in 982 C.E. mentioned that Christianity is extinct in China; the native Christians have perished in one way or another, the church which they had has been destroyed and there is only one Christian left in the land. This is no way is a comprehensive

[125] G. Bell, http://www.gertyncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=2064 (assessed 10.11.2015)
[126] Johnson, Dale A., Visits of Gertrude Bell in Tur Abdin.

report but it does hint at the decline of a Jing Jiao presence and influence in China.

What may be the strongest evidence for a 9th century Christian church is the discovery of a stone base for a free standing cross?

Base for a Stone Cross

On a side street in Ciqikou, Chongqing, China is a round granite stone sitting in front of a curio shop. The owner has placed fish in a socket depression on the top where the base of a standing stone cross once stood. The designs on the side includes crosses within a Bodhi leaf bordered by more Bodi leaves. The design is clearly Persian belonging to the style of leaf crosses.

Fig.13&14:
Crosses within Bodhi (Ficus Religiosa) leaves of Persian Design

Fig.14

Leaf Crosses of Persia:

These crosses are also sometimes called Leaved Crosses or Persian crosses as they symbolize at the bottom a set of leaves. The leaves usually flow upwards either side of the base of the cross symbolizing the cross as the tree of life. This symbolism is not found in Latin or even in Byzantine art. Examples of this type cross are found in India where Persian Christianity found its way to the subcontinent in the first millennium. Crosses with a Bodhi leaf (heart shape or spade designs) are identified as Persian crosses.

Fig 15 (left) &16 (right)[127]
Kottakkavu (Parur) Crosses Fig. 16

The Saint Thomas Kottakkavu Church at North Paravur under the diocese of Ernakulam-Ankamaly of the Syro Malabar Church has an ancient Persian Cross. (see above Fig. 15 &16).

This cross (Fig. 17) is engraved on granite stone believed to be done by Mar Sabore and Mar Prothe about 880 AD. This is now preserved in the chapel in front of the church. This confirmed the dating of the Ciqikou crosses as also 9th century.[128]

Fig. 17. Ceiling of Mor Gabriel Monastery, Midyat, Turkey

[127] http://nasrani.net/2008/02/29/analogical-review-on-st-thomas-cross-the-symbol-of-nasranis (accessed 10.11.2015).
[128] Ayyar ASR "A New Persian Cross from Travancore" - Kadamattam Cross. Joseph T K"- Another Persian Cross in Travancore"- Kadamattam Cross.

For several years I stood three times a week under the ceiling of Mor Gabriel Monastery (present day southeast Turkey). Above me was a stunning mosaic containing gold, silver, turquoise, obsidian, and other precious metals and stones. The mosaic is attributed to Justinian whose workers completed the work in the early fifth century. At the time the monastery was on the border of the Byzantine and Persian empires. Over the centuries the monastery was raided by Persian armies. Much of the gold was taken from the ceiling which was estimated to contain 18 kilos of the precious metal. Still, much of the gold remains. Framing a pattern of grape leaves and a central cross was a border of “spade” figures. I have come to interpret these as fig leaves.

Socket cylinder system

The stone unit found in Ciqikou is part of a socket cylinder system. This artifact is the first evidence of this system used by Christians of Persian origin in China. “The base with a socket, the monolithic square and slightly tapering shaft with cylindrical terminals, the horizontal piece forming the arms with a double (hole) socket in the middle, and the capital with a cylindrical bottom end are the four members of the open-air cross. They are so well chiseled and proportionate that when put together the socket and cylinder arrangement enables the cross to stand by itself.”[129]

Ficus Religiosa

The fig is first mentioned by Chinese writers in the eighth century, and therefore it is generally thought that figs reached China no earlier than the Tang period (618-907). Duan Chengshi 段成式 in his work on Chinese trade, *Yuyang zazu* 酉阳雜俎 speaks of tin-tin; tin is 'fig' in Arabic, from Fo-tin (Palestine). He mentions that this fruit was produced without blossoms, which is the appearance figs give. The first verifiable report of fig culture in China was that of the celebrated writer Le-Shi-tschen who described figs growing in Chinese gardens.

The leaves of the Bodhi or fig (peepul) tree have a beautiful heart or spade shape- they taper to a needle point. When the leaves first appear their color is red-pinkish but they turn deep green and grow to about 12 to 18 cm long. They are attached to a long flexible stalk which makes them rustle, flutter and dance in the slightest breeze.

Syriac Christians follow a marriage custom practiced by Hindus of Kerala who perform Nischaya Thamboolam (engagement) before marriage. The groom knots a golden Thali (in the shape of a Peepel tree leaf [sacred fig]) attached to either a gold chain or a yellow thread around the brides neck. From the comparative evidence we estimate the base for the stone cross was carved during the latter half of the Tang Dynasty. This corresponds to our estimate that a Jing Jiao

[129] See MENACHERY 2003.

Church was present in what became the Ciqikou area in the 9th century and perhaps slightly earlier.

Syncretism

The *Jingjiao* Christians gravitated to the use of fig leaves in their religious designs as an act of syncretism with Buddhist imagery. Siddartha sat under the Bodi (ficus religiosa) tree and received enlightenment. Christians who came to China at least by the 7th century had at least thirty references to the fig in their sacred texts. Christians found common ground with Buddhists in the use of the Bodhi (fig) leaf imagery.[130]

Part II

A Hidden Cross - A Palindromic Acrostic in the Xi'an-Fu Monument

Fig. 18

Transliteration in *pinyin* read from right to left and top to bottom

"Da Qin Jingjiao Liuxing Zhongguo Bei"

Translation:

The Memorial of the Luminous Religion of Da Qin Proclaimed in China

A word puzzle is embedded in the heading of the Xi'an-Fu Monument. It is in the form of a palindromic acrostic consisting of nine Chinese characters forming a type of palindromic acrostic creating an embedded message if read in other directions. This type of acrostic has a palindromic quality as words can be read in several directions to either mirror a word or form a hidden message. Hidden messages of this kind were popular in Chinese inscriptions of the Tang Era period when the Xi'an-Fu inscription was made (781 AD).

Palindromes are made of words or letters to express hidden, comprehensible, and rational word phrases by reading them in a special order or direction. Some hidden messages are constructed from palindromic words such as "abba" a word Jesus and Paul used.[131] 15 A palindrome is made of a series of letters and words that read the same way backward or forward. It does not matter if the phrase is read from left to right or from right to left. A word palindrome can be

[130] MENACHERY 2003.

[131] Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6 are a few examples. Paul presumably used this Aramaic word in a Greek text.

made of words stacked upon one another that can be read horizontally and vertically.

China has a longhistory of word puzzles dating back to the seventh century BC. Generally, palindromes read the same way forward or backward but in Chinese, palindromes are written as word-units and these are sometimes called phonetic palindromes. The Chinese language lends itself easily to this form of palindromic structure.

Chinese Palindromic Acrostic on the Xian-Fu Monument

The inscription on the Xi'an-Fu Monument reads: 大秦景教流行中國碑 (Fig 18). It consists of nine characters: "da qin jing jiao liu xing zhing gua bei". They are stacked in a nine block grid read from the right to left, top to bottom Hidden within this word block is a message in the shape of a Cross. If read in the pattern of a cross a deeper message appears.

Fig. 19

Fig. 20

Fig. 21

Other possible patterns although less apparent may exist in this word square. For example another way to form a cross is in the form of an "X" so that if we start from the right and move down diagonally we get the following (Fig. 19): 大流碑 (da liu bei): the great people's monument. If we follow by reading diagonally starting from the top left block (Fig. 20), we read: 中流景 (zhong liu jing): the central King. If we read the word square in the form of a cross in the way a believer would make the sign of the cross we would read along a central vertical axis followed by a horizontal axis. Vertical reading (Fig. 21) will be 教流行 (jiao liu xing): *the popular teaching*. Horizonal reading (Fig 21) right to left is 秦流國 (qinliu guo): the Empire (power) flows to nations.

The preferred horizontal reading would be from right to left.. Qin has the meaning of Empire at the time this was written. The Roman Empire was called "Da Qin"or the "Great Empire." My reading of this text would be in the directions a Christian would make signing the sign of the Cross after the fashion of the Church of the East. The thumb, forefinger and middle finger of the right hand would form a triad. The cross would be signed first from forehead to belly in

the vertical direction. Next the three fingers would touch the left shoulder and pass over the heart to the right shoulder and then to center. If the word square is read in this manner as described above it would read "the popular teaching of the Empire that flows to all nations."

External Evidence Supporting the Embedded Reading

At the end of the Tang Dynasty on March 25, 829 in the third year of the reign of Taihe, a memorial was erected outside the city of Luoyang, China. It bears the inscription *Scripture of the Luminous Teaching from Da Qin Promoting the Origin of Origins*. Since the 17th century there has not been a Christian stone monument of equal importance discovered (2006). It certainly rivals the manuscripts found at Dunhuang grottoes or Turfan. This Christian monument was broken and we are missing the lower part. Fortunately we have an important text in Dunhuang to compare it against.

The Luoyang Pillar has inscribed on *Column 20: ... all the sides. But some have accepted the* ***teaching*** *and read and recite it. They believe and understand it and put it faithfully into practice. Of course one knows that the virtue of such people exceed.....* Christianity was understood to be a "teaching" brought by Christians to China.

As this form of eastern Christianity expanded to other nations such as Japan it continued to be viewed as a teaching. Two Japanese missionary monks were sent by the Emperor of Japan, Kammu, (804-806) to find Buddhist texts in China. Perhaps they had heard about the Christian academic project of Prajna and Father Adam who translated the Christian scriptures into Chinese. The Japanese missionaries showed up at the monastery just when the 20-year work was finished. One of the missionaries, Saicho, brought a copy of the seven-volume work back to Mt. Hiei and established the Lotus School out of which the Pure Land and Zen schools emerged in later reform movements. Kukai, who was seven years younger than Saicho (Dengyo), and brought back to his monastery on Mt. Koya. It was called the True Word Teaching. Once again we see this distinctive reference to Christianity as a pedagogical religion.

This idea of Christianity being a "teaching" fits within the psychology of the Chinese mind. The Chinese considered the Tang period as being based on the idea that there is a right teaching, and that the whole society depends on that right teaching. This Chinese psychology is expressed in two forms: (1) Taoism, which is the esoteric side, and (2) Confucianism which is the social side. So it must have been quite pleasing for Chinese Christians to read this "inner message" on the stone which referred to "the popular teaching, Qin that flow to all nations."

Li Zhizao, a Chinese convert under the Jesuits, in the explanatory note that followed the first printed edition of the Xi'an stele as early as 1625, wrote:

> When I lived in the countryside near Lingzhu 靈竺, a [man] from Qiyang 岐陽 in spiritual communion with me, Zhang Gengyu 張賡虞, sent me a copy of the Tang inscription, [together with a letter in which] he said: "It is [a monument] that has been recently found while digging the earth in Chang'an. It bears the title of Jing Jiao liuxing Zhongguo song 景教流行中國頌 [Laudatory memorial of the diffusion into China of the Luminous Teaching]. I had never heard about this religion before. Is this not the 'Heavenly Doctrine' [tianxue] preached by master Li Xitai 利西泰[Matteo Ricci]?" I read [the inscription], and [I found that] it was exactly that [doctrine] ...[132]

Li Zhizao translated the heading to the Xi'an-Fu Stele in the 17th century when it was discovered as the *Laudatory memorial of the diffusion into China of the Luminous Teaching*. It is interesting that he translates the character 教 as "teaching" rather than "religion." Chinese converts like Li began to adopt the name of "*Jingjiao* Houxue"景教後學, which means "disciples of the Luminous Teaching". Churches in China called themselves "J*ingjiao* Tang" 景教堂, or "Churches of the Luminous Teaching". It suggests that these churches did not see themselves in the same way as did the Church of the East based in Mesopotamia

Internal Evidence Supporting the Embedded Reading

In the body of the main text on the Xi'an-Fu Stele, Christianity is depicted as a teaching religion. We read:

> 隨方設教．密濟群生．大秦國大德阿羅本 (Column 12)
> They go everywhere to teach the world, and to help the afflicted in the world, using sails and oars to help them travel from the kingdom of Da Qin.

Later in the text we read:

> 遠將經像來獻上京．詳其教旨．玄妙無為．觀其元宗．(Column 12)
> Alopen, a man of great virtue, came from far away carrying his doctrine and images to present them to the royal court. We have examined the intent of their **teaching** from its very foundations

> 生成立要．詞無繁說．理有忘筌．濟物利人．(Column 12-13)
> and we have found this doctrine is excellent and does not contradict, originating since the creation of the world. The doctrine does not consist of many words, nor does it base its truth superficially, but it brings salvation and civility to men."

[132] See NICOLINI-ZANI 2006.

Here we listen to the voice of the Chinese scholars who pronounce the "teachings" to be "excellent" and agrees with notions of Chinese "civility and values. Clearly, the stone reinforces the idea of Christianity as a "teaching" or even a philosophy in the manner of Confucianism.

Contextual Evidence Supporting the Technique

There is nothing unusual or unique about reading the Xian-Fu Monument in different directions to acquire hidden or variant messages. During the Tang Era coins were minted with Chinese characters that could be read meaningfully in different directions. In general, coins were read in two directions: clockwise or top to bottom and right to left.

Three years into the reign of the Tang Dynasty a new type of coin (*left*, Fig. 22) appeared in the year 621 during the reign of Emperor Gao Zu. This new coin had the inscription *Kai yuan tong bao* (开元通宝). The inscription was meant to be read in the standard order of top character (*kai* 开), bottom character (*yuan* 元), right character (*tong* 通) and left character (bao 宝). *Kai yuan* (开元) in this inscription has the meaning of "opening a new era" and the *tong bao* (通宝) was a new term meant to indicate "universal currency". The coin was also read in another order and direction. The other way to read this coin was in clockwise direction: *kai tong yuan bao* (开通元宝) with *yuan bao* (元宝) having the meaning of "original currency".

To the left (Fig. 23) is a lock charm with five Chinese characters (symbols). There are actually two inscriptions. One inscription is composed of the two smaller characters at the upper right (三) and the upper left (仙). "Three Immortals". Similarly, the three-character inscription on the charm is read 福祿壽 (reading right to left) "happiness, emolument and longevity".[111]

Chinese Cultural Influences

Are there monument steles similar to the Xi'an-Fu stone that bear this same characteristic of word-play embedded within the primary message? Not far from the Xi'an-Fu monument in the Beilin Museum is a row of steles. One of them

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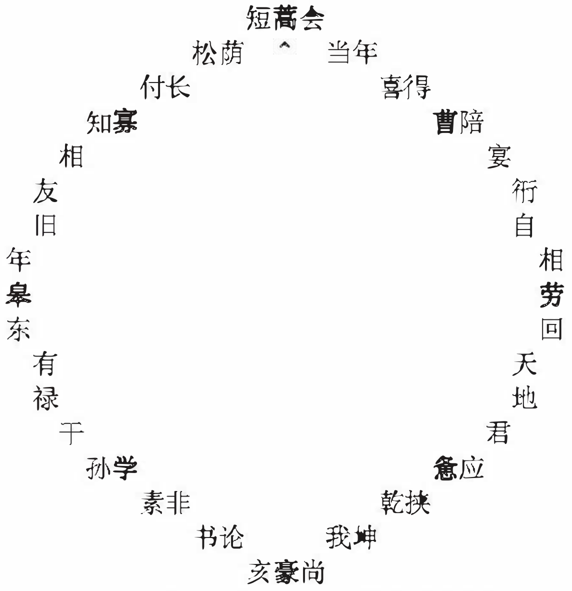
[111] For further information on reading Chinese coin inscriptions see: primaltrek.com/guide.html.

bears the inscription "ning jing zhi yuan 寧靜致遠" which means *to achieve a peaceful sleep*. If we read it in the opposite direction from the bottom up it reads "yuan zhi jing ning" meaning *Peaceful spirit*. This was a common practice of the Tang Dynasty at the time the Xian-Fu inscription was made. It does not surprise us to see a hidden formula in plain view. It would be more surprising if there was no esoteric message within the message.[134]

Also Tang era poets used palindromic acrostic methods within their poems to hide meaning and messages: This was done by using placing characters in a pattern (every eighth character or reading or reading in a clockwise manner, or reading the poem right to left horizontally top to bottom.



高会当年喜得曹，日陪宴衎自相劳。
力回天地君应惫，心狭乾坤我尚豪。
豕亥论书非素学，子孙干禄有东皋。
十年求友相知寡，分付长松荫短蒿。

Here the first character of each line is used to form an independent sentence with a hidden meaning.[135]

Syriac Influence

Would the creator of the inscription of the Xi'an-Fu stone have been aware of palindromic acrostics and/or have been favorable to their use? Prior to the ninth

[134] See DALE 2013.

[135] 藏头诗，又名"藏头格"(acrostic poems)，是中国古诗杂体诗中的一种.

century the use of the acrostic was dominant in Syriac hymns. (After the ninth century Arabic and Byzantine influences impacted the development of Syriac poetry.) Beginning with Aphrahat in the 3rd century and his *23 Demonstrations* we find that 22 of these are alphabetic acrostics.[136]

Syriac hymnology knew no other form of hymn writing than using acrostics. Some of these acrostics were more sophisticated. Ephrem's chiastic arrangements lend themselves to palindromic movement both within the lines and in "ABBA" strophic patterns and other variations. The Nativity Hymn 11 lends itself to palindromic-acrostic patterns.

J.B. Chabot in his article in the 1913 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia pointed out that one of the most famous acrostics is by Saint Ephrem where, the acrostic forms the name "Jesus Christ" and begins with the strophe:

> *Jesus Our Lord the Christ* (Iso maran m'siha) Has appeared to us from the bosom of His Father; He has come to deliver us from darkness, And to illumine us with his resplendent light. It is preceded by the following distich, which forms the refrain: Light is arisen upon the just And joy for those who are broken-hearted. Likewise a hymn of Narses on the Epiphany begins: *Error like darkness,* Was stretched over creatures; The light of Christ is arisen And the world possesses knowledge. Its refrain is the following distich: The light of the appearing of Christ Has rejoiced the earth and the heavens.[137]

Kathleen McVey in her translation of the works of Ephrem points out several acrostics. Most notable are Hymns 47 and 48 on Virginity. Within these acrostics are anagrams, and paronomasia that demonstrate the use of wordplay giving a palindromic movement to the poems.[138] Ephrem's *Hymns of Faith* have several examples of alphabetic acrostics. Andrew Palmer has reconstructed some of these *Hymns* with an excellent discussion of acrostic construction.[139] A Syriac text of Ephrem's *Acrostic Admonitions* can be found in Rahmani's *Studia Syriaca.*[140] Ephrem signed his own name in the form of an acrostic.[141]

Syriac manuscripts are filled with examples of acrostic patterns. Among MSS of the Assyrian Church of the East, we find "Dispute Poems" called *Sogiatha*

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136 British Library Additional MS 12,176 and the Vatican Apostolic Library Syriac MS 111 (both of which are datable around AD 500) show these kinds of acrostics in hymns 6, 11, 26, 32, 67, and 68.

137 See, http://oce.catholic.com/index.php?title=Syriac_Hymnody.

138 MCVEY, 452

139 PALMER in *Gouden Hoorn*, Volume 4, issue 2 (winter 1996-1997); PALMER in DEN BOEFT-HILHORST 1993; 167–233; PALMER in *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 55 (2003): 147–94; PALMER in *Sobornost: Eastern Churches Review* 17 (1995): 28-40; and PALMER in *Parole de l'Orient* 20 (1995): 129–200.

140 See RAHMANI 1904-1909: Volumn 1: Ephrem: An Alphabetical Acrostic of Admonitions.

141 PALMER in *Sobornost: Eastern Churches Review* 17:1 (1995): 28-40.

that are primarily in the form of alphabetic acrostics. Some are even more sophisticated in their inner structure. One of my favorite is between Body and Soul. They go to court to litigate who caused the other to sin.[142]

No doubt that the early Syriac writers were influenced by the presence of this literary technique from biblical sources such as Lamentations and the Psalms such as 119. The Psalms have a primary place in the liturgies of the Syriac churches. Within Festal liturgies such as the *Fenqitho* of the Syriac west and the *Hudra* of the Church of the East, many examples of palindromic acrostics were carried to China and the Tang Courts.

Tantric Buddhist Influences

Adam, the composer of the text of the Xian-Fu Monument, would have been profoundly impacted by literary techniques in Syriac liturgy and literature. The writer of the inscription was especially familiar with Ephrem as his linguistic influence is witnessed on the text of the stone.

Adam was also working with esoteric Tantric Buddhists. Tantric Buddhism arrived in China in the first half of the seventh century about the same time as Alopen arrived in Xi'an to take up his duties as Bishop. Tantric Buddhism reached its zenith in the next century when Adam was working on a massive 20 volume 20 year project to translate the message of Christianity from Syriac to Chinese. He worked with Prajna and other Tantric Buddhists. These literary giants had similar affinities for esoteric terms and techniques as applied to literature. Adam's formation in Ephramic word-play and Prajna's esoteric tendencies called forth by Tantric Buddhism was a perfect combination of interests.

Chinese Esoteric Buddhism was especially associated with the Tang Dynasty. It is referred to as Tángmì（唐密）"Tang Dynasty Secret Buddhism," or Hànchuánmìzōng（漢傳密宗）"Secret Buddhism of the Han Transmission" (Hànmì 漢密 for short), or Dōngmì（東密）"Eastern Secret Buddhism." In a more general sense, the Chinese term Mìzōng（密宗）"The Secret Way", is the most popular term used when referring to any form of Esoteric Buddhism. The Emperor Xuanzong had a particular fascination with secret Tantric formulas. He was the longest ruling Tang Emperor and had a profound influence on the production of Tantric literature. He also had an influence on the practice of Christian ritual. The altar of the Da Qin monastery seemed to be designed in the manner of a tantric mandala. It was called a Tanchang where the microcosm represents the macrocosm which was a kind of visual palindrome.[143]

[142] BROCK in REININK-VANSTIPHOUT 1969; KIRCHNER in *Oriens Christianus* 6 (1906): 1–69; 7 (1907): 254–91.
[143] CHEN in WINKLER-TANG, eds. (2009): 195-213.

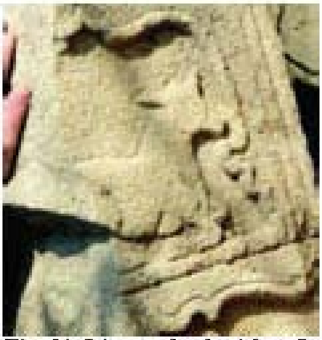
Fig. 24: Lingwu lamb with stylistic frame distinctive of Christian tombstones in China. 9th c.

We know that Tang Emperor Suzong lived in exile in Lingwu, Ningxia, for two years in the 8th century (755-57). The Xi'an Fu inscription says he built churches in the region and most certainly one in Lingwu. Where was it? Where is the evidence? I have been searching for six months. I think I have found it or at least part of it. See Fig. 24.

Buddhism in general ignores the image of a lamb or sheep in its iconography. Dragons, bats, oxen, elephants are common images found in Buddhist temples in China. One does not see a lamb in Buddhist iconography. One might even say that a lamb or even a sheep is despised. In Tibet there is a saying: Better to live one day as a tiger than a thousand years as a sheep. The lamb or sheep is seen as a metaphor of weakness. Still, there is compassion for this animal. In the *Dummedha Jataka Tales*, the Buddha, a prince of Benares, was appalled by the sacrificial massacre of sheep, goats, pigs, and other animals, in accordance with Vedic ritual. Each year, until the death of his father, he performed his own rituals—without killing animals to the spirit of a special banyan tree.

In general, though, it can be said that sheep have little significance in Buddhism. Lambs and sheep do not appear in Buddhist iconography. Therefore, when I saw a lamb on a stone in the courtyard of a Buddhist monastery in Lingwu I was quite surprised. The stone was not part of the monastery building which dated back to the 8th century although most of it was built in the 14-15th centuries. I found this stone along the side wall of the monastery as part of a collection of un-identified stones. Most of the stones were decorated bases for columns. It was obvious the stone was not considered important as it was not in an area designated for tourists or monks. It was an archaeological boneyard or should I say "stoneyard." Beside, a sheep or lamb figure would be out of place in a Buddhist monastery.

On close inspection of the stone I could see that there was a distinctive frame around the lamb depicted in the center. This frame is in the style of Nestorian Christian tombstones found in China as far east as Quanzhou (port of entry for the maritime Silk Road) and along the central Asian section of the Silk Road in places like Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tashkent.[144] The image and the frame point to a Christian source. Most likely this was a tombstone although it could have been part of a church building. If it had an inscription, even part of one, we could be more certain about its identification.

[144] See DICKENS in WINKLER-TANG 2009.

Conclusion

Because Christianity in China was perceived as a teaching, it is no surprise to find this idea in the hidden message of the Xian-Fu Monument. Furthermore, to find this message using a technique to read charms, a technique that began to appear on charms and inscriptions including other steles early in the Tang Era before the Xian-Fu inscription was written only reinforces the relative certainty that the title to the Xian-Fu Monument was designed with this technique in mind.

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THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE TANGTSE INSCRIPTIONS

Roderic L. MULLEN
Durham, NC, USA

Since the early 1900s the scholarly world has known of inscriptions from the Ladakhi village of Tangtse. These inscriptions, in Sogdian, Arabic, and other languages, attest to travelers from many lands, who passed through the region. Crosses, initially described as "Maltese Crosses," are found carved in close proximity to some of the inscriptions. The inscriptions have been studied for their linguistic and historical value, but a detailed study of their geographical setting has so far been lacking. It may be that studying the several inscriptions in context and as a group will shed further light on their significance. The present paper is an attempt to understand first, why Tangtse, tucked in a high mountain valley, might be an attractive setting for travelers to leave a record of their presence. Secondly, what the sheer variety of inscriptions might indicate? More particularly, how are we to understand the crosses in relation to the inscriptions?

I. Geographical Setting

Lying near to the Karakorum fault zone, the valley in which Tangtse village is situated has been studied with some care by modern geologists. More than ten thousand years ago the site of the village was under water, part of the river bed that then allowed the waters of Pangong Tso to flow into what we call the Shyok river.[1] More important for understanding the village in historical times are reports beginning from the 1800s when surveyors from British India began to study the routes leading over the Himalayas into Chinese territory. The survey reports, together with later accounts, tell us there were four main routes into, or rather through, the village, and that a variety of supplies could be found there. The men who made the surveys were justly proud of their work, and their information gives additional depth to our knowledge of the region. Significantly, their survey reports date from the days before motorized transport and so perhaps give some indication of what might have been available to travelers during the Middle Ages. In recent years the site has become popular as a rest stop on tours from Leh to Pangong Tso, and Greenpeace has assisted in funding a solar array there to provide electricity to the region.[2]

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[1] PHILIPS 2008. DORTCH 2011.

[2] GREEPEANCE 2010.

There are four routes into Tangtse: (1). From Leh generally eastward by way of Karu looping North through the Chang La Pass, (2). A route more or less westward from Pangong Tso, (3). A route moving northwest from Chusul by way of Harong, and (4). A route similar to that from Leh but traversing the shorter yet far more difficult Kay La Pass.

To the best of my knowledge, the first published mention of Tangtse in English is tangential to a brief discussion of Chang-La Pass, which is entry number 35 in a list of geographical names collected by Hermann de Schlagintweit and his brothers in 1863:

> Jángla, near Tángtse, in Ladák, lat. 34°, long. 77°.—byang la, "north pass." Byang, here pronounced jang, "north;" la, "pass."[3]

The first detailed account I have found comes in a survey published in 1867 by W. H. Johnson, who describes the village thus:

> Tanksi. Small village, situated on the banks of a small stream which is supposed to have once drained the Pangong Lake above its junction with the Chusul River. The village is noted for its storehouses—hides, skins, horns, and grain being kept here for the Maharajah. All coolies, provisions, &c., are taken from this place by travelers visiting the Changchenmo, and other parts. An attempt has been made to plant out a willow garden, but on account of the intense cold during the winter the trees remain small and stunted. There are two roads leading from Durgu (*i.e.*, Durbuk) to Tanksi, one along the right bank of the Chusul River, and the other along the left; the latter road crosses the river by a small bridge made of river branches, covered with smooth slate-slabs, which, being loosely put down, render the bridge dangerous. The road on the right bank is good, and crosses the river by a ford about 1 ½ miles below Tanksi. There are several roads leading from Tanksi to different parts of the country, the chief one being to Chusul south of the Pangong, and to Shera andIgu on the banks of the Indus, via Sasakul village.[4]

In the same year and in the same journal, but writing up notes from 1863, H. H. Godwin-Austen made mention of snowfall in the Chang La Pass in early July and commented on the broad mountain valley below Tangtse and the number of fish to be found in the stream that flows through the town.[5]

Taking the routes into town one by one, we can look first at the road from Leh through Karu and across Chang La Pass. This is the most commonly described route, at least from the point of view of British India, as it leads from the capital of Ladakh toward the frontier with China. Listing the sections of a journey

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[3] SCHLAGINTWEIT, SCHLAGINTWEIT, and SCHLAGINTWEIT 1863, 79.
[4] JOHNSON 1867,23.
[5] GODWIN-AUSTEN 1867, 343-44.

from Leh eastward to Pangong Tso, T. D. Forsyth described the following as he descended from Chang La:

> 26. On the north side of the pass the road was somewhat more rugged; but care had been taken to remove the larger boulders, and to fill up the rough parts with clods of earth, so that not the slightest difficulty was experienced in the whole passage, and I may here notice that, on our return, we found the road still more improved, and saw laden camels crossing the pass with perfect ease. As this, though not quite that highest, is the most difficult pass between Ladakh and Shadulla, I have given all the details.
> 27. An easy descent of 14 miles brought us to the village of Durgoh (*i.e.*, Durbuk), on the branch of the Shyok river, where grass, water, and fuel were to be had in abundance. Here I commenced the process of weeding out inefficient baggage cattle, and 40 ponies were ordered to be got rid of. From Durgoh the road lies along a well-grassed valley past the village of Tankse to Muglib. Tankse is the last village deserving that name between Ladakh and Yarkund. For one or two marches we saw stones put together to form walls of roofless huts, and then for the next three weeks all was desert waste.
> 28. About 10 miles beyond Muglib we reached the Pangong Lake...[6]

Worth noting here is that from Durbuk one could easily reach the settlement of Shyok and travel down the Shyok river. In a related report, Forsyth's assistant Captain J.Biddulph left an account of using sheep as pack animals while traveling east from Tangtse:

> I left Tankse on 18th September, taking with me thirty sheep carrying loads of grain and flour. Wishing merely to test their marching capabilities, I looked upon the supplies they carried as extra, and their loads remained intact till within four marches of Shahidoolla, when I was forced to commence using them.
>
> The Tartars usually make their sheep carry a load of 32 lbs., and march seven or eight miles a day only, making frequent halts; as, however, I expected to be marching hard at times, I put only a load of 20 lbs. on each sheep. Beyond this I took no care of them, and they simply took their chance.
>
> A great part of the route was over rough and stony ground, but only one sheep broke down, though many of them showed signs of footsoreness at times.
>
> The loads secured by breast and breach ropes ride well, sinking into the fleece, and not being liable to shift.
>
> On fair ground where they travelled with a broad front they marched at the rate of 1 ¾ mile an hour; a large number would no doubt travel slower, and much must depend on the breadth of the road.

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[6] FORSYTH 1871, 6.

> The greatest difficulty they had to contend with was crossing streams, and while marching in the Karakash Valley they were sometimes obliged to cross the river three or four times in a day. Not only were their loads liable to become damaged, but the weight of water hanging in their fleeces, and on several occasions freezing, greatly impeded progress.
>
> On the days on which they had no grass, they literally had nothing to eat, as they refused grain, not being accustomed to it.
>
> One man was sufficient to manage the lot, and two men, I should say, could easily drive and manage an hundred.
>
> On arrival in camp they were unloaded, and turned out to shift for themselves till dark, when they were herded for the night.
>
> The fact that a flock of sheep carrying 20 lbs. loads should be able to march 330 miles in a month with only one casualty, through a country in which forage is always scanty, and at a very inclement season of the year, is remarkable.[7]

A further note on the use of sheep as pack animals on the journey eastward from Tangtse is found in H. Trotter's 1876 report of the journey his pundit assistant Nain Singh took from Tangtse to Lhasa:

> The Pundit was obliged to travel slowly, as the whole of his worldly possessions—including tent, bedding, and commissariat for the whole party—had to be carried on the backs of sheep. It is astonishing what admirable beasts of burden these animals make in a pastoral country. The Pundit started with twenty-six sheep from Tankse. Of these some were eaten on the road, some became ill and were exchanged for fresh ones; but four or five of the original lot reached Lhasa, having, in less than four months, carried loads of from 20 to 25 lbs. each, over a distance of more than 1000 miles. Throughout the journey they never received a single ounce of food beyond what they could pick up for themselves on the road and at the camping grounds.[8]

Two years later, Trotter supplied more details of the route, giving an indication of the regional importance of Tangtse for traders, merchants and soldiers who might pass through the area:

> [T]he Kailas range may be crossed either by the Chang La (17,600 feet), or the Kay La (17,900 feet). By the former and easier road of the two it is 23 miles from Zingral to the large village of Tankse, situated on one of the tributaries of the Shyok River. By the Kay La foot-passengers shorten the road by some 6 miles. The roads over both passes, although free from glaciers, are very difficult; and it is usual, although not absolutely necessary, to employ yaks in carrying goods across.

[7] BIDDULPH 1875, 492.
[8] TROTTER 1876-77, 327.

> Tankse is the last place on this road where supplies are procurable, and is, by the shortest route, 350 miles from Sanju, the first large village encountered in Turkistan. For the whole of this distance supplies of grain, both for men and horses, have to be carried, and at a great many halting-places neither grass nor fire-wood is procurable. From Tankse, after passing Lukong at the head of the Pangong Lake, the road crosses a lofty mass of mountains by the Lankar or Marsemik La (28,400 feet)...[9]

The reports cited above discuss the East-West route in some detail, and form the substance of what was knowable in the scholarly world about the region around Tangtse up to the beginning of the twentieth century.[10] We see that supplies of grain, sheep, hides, skins, and horns were available and that horses and yaks could evidently be supplied if requested. Clear too is the height of the passes that needed to be traversed in and out of Tangtse and the need to take care of the weather in traveling. We can imagine, then, that travelers in the middle ages might find themselves in Tangtse for a number of days gathering supplies, waiting for good weather, and bargaining with local residents. Plenty of time, in other words, for inscribing one's name and a few other particulars on a boulder near the outskirts of town.

The next report of which I am aware is that sent by the Moravian medical missionary F. E. Shawe to August Hermann Francke on 19 July 1906 in which he mentions the Tangtse inscriptions for the first time. Francke first published Shawe's letter in 1914 in volume 1 of his *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, a work undertaken at the behest of Dr. J. H. Marshall, C.I.E., Director-General of Archaeology for the government of British India. Even so, the inscriptions do not seem to have come to the attention of church historians until Francke's fuller study of them in a 1925 article in the *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse.* We quote here Shawe's letter as Franke reports it in 1914:

> I was told yesterday by one of the men that at Sakti you only visited the newest of the three old castles—the oldest being a mile or two up the valley. I am sorry I did not know when there. I saw few, if any, rock carvings in Sakti, except a *migmang* (see p.57) on a boulder. At Drangtse is an old castle and village on top of a rock, destroyed by the Dogras. It is in very fair preservation, some of the streets being quite recognisable. Around Drangtse are numbers—thousands—of rock carvings of the usual ibex and yak type, but no Indian bulls, as far as I saw. At first I thought there were no inscriptions, and nobody could or would tell of any; but later, on top of a large rock or boulder, I found a number of carvings of some of which I enclose an original copy—one, a *chorten*, had a long inscription beneath in letters, which appear to be mostly, but not entirely Tibetan, and on another boulder a line in Persian characters. Two or three carvings of crosses were rather interesting. I

9 TROTTER 1878, 181.
10 LYDEKKER 1883, passim.

give copies. Another carving about a mile out, on the road to Pangkong (lake) of a stag hunt thus [drawing]. A large and rough outline of a Buddha on a rock seems to be fairly new—newer than some *chortens* on the same rock. I found no kings' names or votive inscriptions on *manis* at Drangtse, and the clay tablets were all of the *chorten* type without letters, as far as I could see. Chushol yielded nothing of antiquarian interest, and I found nothing more till I got to Nyoma on the Indus.[11]

Drangtse here is Tangtse, and it is worth noting that Shawe saw one of the Tibetan inscriptions as well as an inscription that he believed to be in Persian script. He notes the existence of the inscribed crosses and says that he has sent drawings.

Also in the area in 1906 was the famous Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin, who gives an indication of contemporary prices and supplies in the town based on his experience in organizing expeditions out of Tangtse to surrounding regions:

After consultation with Muhamed Isa, I resolved to hire an auxiliary caravan of thirty horses from Tankse to accompany us for the first month and then return. Hence arose a financial problem. The men of Tankse asked 35 rupees a month for each horse, or 1050 rupees in all; of course they ran a great risk, and I must therefore undertake to pay 30 rupees for each horse that fell on the outward journey, and 10 rupees for one that fell on the return home. In the worst case, then, the cost would amount to 1950 rupees. On the other hand if I bought these horses at 60 rupees a head, the total expenditure would be 1800 rupees, and the horses would belong to me. Then the old problem was repeated: I should have to take fodder for these thirty horses, and engage ten men to attend to them, and for these men provisions must be obtained. After many pros and cons we at length decided to hire the horses only, for then their owners would accompany them at their own risk and supply themselves with rations carried by seven yaks.[12]

Hedin also gives important details about the journey going East out of Tangtse via Muglib toward Pangong Tso:

We left the Tankse monastery on its rocky spur to our left, and henceforth kept to the right side of the Muglib brook, now at the foot of the mountains and past its cones of detritus, now over easily recognizable denudation terraces, and again along the bank of the brook, where here and there we came across a miniature meadow. Down in the valley (p.69) at Muglib there is good rich pasture; close by the brook the meadows are swampy and treacherous but higher up the soil is sandy, and even thistles crop up among the grass...

The village of Muglib consists of three wretched huts, and its twelve inhabitants cultivate barley and peas. The barley harvest was expected in ten days, but the peas were still in full blossom, and would not be ripe until the frosts set in. They

[11] SHAWE 1906.
[12] HEDIN 1909, 50-51.

> are then used as horse fodder while they are still soft and green. I asked some Muglib men what they did in winter. "Sleep and freeze," they answered.

The third volume of Sven Hedin's *Trans-Himalaya* describes events of 1907 and gives us an idea of the route into Tangtse from the Southeast, that is, from Chusul via Harong and Chilam:

> [W]e rode away from the houses of Chushul and the frozen canals, which during the warmer seasons irrigate the barley-fields of the village.
>
> We ourselves work our way laboriously up to the pass Kongta-la, a pebble-covered saddle 16,605 feet above sea-level... The fall from the Kongta-la north-westwards is imperceptible. We pass six tents and two flocks of grazing sheep... The valley falls more steeply and its bottom is full of granite blocks troublesome to pass, among which a brooklet murmurs under its crystal roof of ice...
>
> Now there is a rapid descent... Chilam is a village a little farther down, where our yaks can only be induced by coaxing and threats to trust themselves on a swinging bridge of stone slabs supported by two tree trunks...
>
> The Ladak chain, which we have so long had on out right, drops behind us, and the brook turns sharply to the north-east to break through a transverse valley in the chain which separates us from the country of the Panggong-tso. The breached valley is picturesquely hemmed in between high steep granite rocks, and its fall is so rapid that the ice has not been able to form on the foaming rapids. Only occasionally is there room for a hut and a patch of cultivated land...
>
> Now we are near the end. There lies Tankse...[13]

By the early 1900s, difficult and remote as Hedin makes the journey from the southeast into Tangtse sound, the East-West journey from Leh via Tangtse to Pangong Tso seems to have become something of a tourist attraction. In a letter of 26 May 1912, the eye surgeon Sebastian Schmitt, who had been on a medical mission to the Tangtse area with the Präses Fr. Peter the previous autumn, reported to Francke as follows about his return from a short shooting expedition with a Ladakhi companion during that trip:

> On the way back I thought near Trangtse to take a shortcut and went through a rocky desert. Then suddenly I came upon some blocks of granite, on which all sorts of figures, crosses and writings were inscribed. My companion could not give an answer to my question for information about the origin and meaning. So I contented myself with a few records, and I hope to learn from you once more the nearer and deeper meaning. When I returned to the rest house, I told Brother Peter of my discovery. And because it was just opposite our apartment, I could point out to him the stone in question from our lodgings. In Trangtse at that time was also a hunter,

[13] HEDIN 1913, 69-72.

> a certain Mrs. Trench whom Brother Peter had met previously, yes, he even borrowed her fur coat, when he returned from Kyelang, and she met him. With her he seems to have shared my discovery and went with her to the spot. (She made a photograph of the rock art, which is unsatisfactory.) My remaining time for the afternoon was filled with cataract surgery. Near Schatschukul I discovered once again crosses and inscriptions, but could not photograph due to discomfort.[14]

Schmitt's 1912 report gives the impression that the Tangtse region was becoming better known not only to soldiers and surveyors but also to missionaries and more casual travelers (how else to explain the presence of the hunter Mrs. Trench, who seems not to have been a part of Schmitt's medical mission?) So too, word was beginning to spread among those seriously devoted to the study of Central Asia. In publishing the first volume of his work *Antiquities of Indian Tibet* (i.e., Ladakh) in 1914, Francke commented on the information contained in Shawe's and Schmitt's letters:

> As regards the inscription "mostly, but not entirely Tibetan," Dr. Shawe's copy of it was sent to Dr. Vogel, who said that it probably dated from c. 700-900 A.D., judging by the form of the characters used. It contained the Buddhist formula *Ye dharma*, etc., which, [p.60] according to my observations, played the part of the *Om mani padme hum* among the Ladakhi Buddhists of those times. The Indian characters, used by them, bear a remarkable resemblance to the Tibetan characters, for which reason I have come to the conclusion that the Tibetan script was developed in the western parts of Tibet, probably under the influence of Kashmir and Turkestan Buddhism. This inscription may possible give a clue to the date of the Maltese crosses found by Dr. Shawe in the vicinity. Christianity in its Nestorian form was somewhat powerful in Turkestan about 900 A.D., and, although I do not venture to assert that there was a Christian community at Drangtse in those days, I think it not improbable that the ancient inhabitants of Drangtse had become acquainted with Christian forms of crosses. It is very probable that trade connections between Ladakh and Turkestan existed as early as 700-900 A.D. The Ladakhis were probably ready to try the efficacy of the Christian crosses for the sake of ex-

[14] SCHMITT 1912. "Auf dem Rückweg dachte ich in der Nähe von Trangtse etwas abzukürzen und ging über eine Steinwüste. Da auf einmal stand ich vor einigen Granitblöcken, auf denen allerlei Figuren, Kreuze und Schriften eingegraben waren. Mein Begleiter konnte mir auf meine Fragen keine Auskunft geben über Entstehung und Bedeutung. Ich begnügte mich darum mit einigen Aufnahmen, und hoffe von Dir einmal nähere und tiefere Bedeutung der Sache zu erfahren. Als ich ins Rasthaus zurückkam, erzählte ich Bruder Peter vom meiner Entdeckung. Und da es gerade unserer Wohnung gegenüber war, konnte ich ihm auch die in Frage kommenden Steine von der Wohnung aus bezeichnen. In Trangtse war damals auch eine Jägerin, eine gewisse Mrs. Trench, die Br. Peter schon vorher kennengelernt hatte, ja, der er sogar seinen Pelzmantel geborgt hatte, als er von Kyelang zurückkehrte,und sie ihm begegnete. Dieser scheint er nun meine Entdeckung mitgeteilt zu haben und mit ihr an Ort und Stelle gegangen zu sein. (Sie machte eine Photographie der Felszeichnungen, welche unbrauchbar ist.) Meine übrige Zeit für den Nachmittag war mit Staroperationen ausgefüllt. In der Nähe von Schatschukul entdeckte ich noch einmal Kreuze und Schriften, konnte sie aber infolge Unwohlseins nicht photographieren."

> periment, just as they swallow pages of Christian books nowadays, if swallowed pages of Buddhist writings have not the desired effect.[15]

Franck did not publish drawings of the inscribed crosses in 1914, or give any details beyond describing their shape as "Maltese." He did, though, offer a cautionary note indicating that there did not seem to be any evidence of a functioning Christian community at Tangtse in the middle ages. At the same time, he made a suggestion as to their possible broader significance, noting their similarities to some of the gravestones published by Chwolson:

> These crosses were again examined by Rev. S. Schmitt of Lek in 1911. Mr. Schmitt found inscriptions in an unknown script, running from top to bottom, in the vicinity of the crosses. Professor Grünwedel of Berlin points to the similarity between the Drangtse inscriptions and the Nestorian tomb-inscriptions treated by Chvolson of St. Petersburg. Dr. A. von LeCoq pronounces the language of the inscriptions to be Soghdian. The word S[a]mark[a]nda may be read without difficulty. According to Professor F. W. K. Müller, the Drangtse inscriptions were carved by pilgrims and dated.[16]

In the following year C. M. Enriquez made a very brief mention of Tangtse and its inscriptions in an account of his travels through Central Asia in 1907. Apart from his note about the grove of trees and the weather, Enriquez is important as the first to publish a picture of any inscriptions from Tangtse. Although his photograph shows only one of the larger inscriptions in Tibetan characters, he does give some idea of the setting of the place:

> After a rest we marched on to Tankse, which has a comparatively comfortable altitude of only 13,200 feet. Here we halted for a day in a most charming grove of trees, to repair our damaged kit, and to clean ourselves up a bit. There were several large inscriptions on the rocks.
>
> I found the daily wind more trying in the Tankse valley than anywhere else in Ladakh. It got up at ten in the morning, blew grit and dust about all day, and subsided in the evening, leaving the sun burnt skin of my face and hands tingling with irritation. I found zinc ointment gave much relief.[17]

Having touched already on Francke's 1925 study of the material that had been passed on to him by Shawe and Schmitt, it is worth mentioning F. W. Müller's appended article in the same journal that attempts a first reading of the Sogdian inscriptions.[18] A further decade would pass before additional information became available.

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[15] FRANCKE 1914, 59-60.
[16] *Ibid.*, 60, n.2.
[17] ENRIQUEZ 1915, 198.
[18] MÜLLER 1925, 371-72 & taf. III.

In the 1930s the geologist Hehnut de Terra and the limnologist George Evelyn Hutchinson began publishing on the geology, water resources and the history of climate in the Himalayas. The first account of their work to appear was a brief article by De Terra in 1933 in the *Himalayan Journal.* De Terra noted that the numerous fish in the Tangtse stream were a ready resource: "From the Shakya La we moved on and down, into the valley along which runs the regular route from Leh over the Chang La to Tankse. We camped beside the river which provided us with a nice catch of snow trout for our dinner." De Terra had been to the area a few years before. A bit further on in the article he comments:

> Five years ago, while doing geological work in the surrounding country, I had camped here for a week, and I well remembered the bright nights with a full moon shining into the rocky gorge above which rises an old monastery remarkable for its ancient and beautiful frescoes. Across from the monastery lie huge granite blocks with the inscriptions of Nestorian Christians, relics of bygone missions which carried the gospel into Tibet at a time when Anglo-Saxon tribes in central Europe were just beginning to be converted."[19]

In 1934, De Terra published an account of the physiography of the region.[20] Two years later he and Hutchinson jointly published an article which has a more direct bearing on the study of our inscriptions. Concerned mainly with the history of climate, they used the patination on the boulders as an indicator of historic moisture levels:

> At Tang-tse in Eastern Ladak, engravings on patinated granite boulders have been found, from which Hutchinson draws the following inferences:-- (1) since early in the present millennium no patination had formed at Tang-tse, (2) the brown desert varnish on the oldest inscriptions antedates the Nestorian engravings, (3) pictures of a species of deer (Cervus cf. hanglu) possibly indicates that at some period in the Middle Ages Indian Tibet was damp enough to support richer vegetation than is found there nowadays.[21]

Hutchinson also published a more popular account of his work which is valuable for his own observations on the contemporary climate and resources. Like other writers he noted the grove of trees near the village, but as a limnologist he paid particular attention to the stream. He dealt with the fish somewhat more dispassionately than did De Terra, even while noting their abundance: "Hundreds of snow trout live in the stream of Tangtse, hundreds in the stream that

[19] De TERRA 1933.

[20] De TERRA 1934, 12-41. Among those De Terra thanked for his help with the geographical names was J. Gergan. GERGAN and GERGAN 1976, plate following 188, contains a photograph of the Tangtse inscriptions. This photograph was later used in the first printing of MAR APREM 1976, plate at end.

[21] DE TERRA and HUTCHINSON 1936, 8-9.

discharges into Panggong Tso.'"[22] Hutchinson's chief contribution to the study of our inscriptions, though, lies in his noticing an inscription in Tocharian and in association with a cross. In 1939 he observed:

> Close to the village of Tang-tse and therefore within or very near to one of the basins of the great interglacial fresh-water lakes of the Lake Schlagintweit complex, is another engraved rock, of the greatest interest. The rock has been described by Francke (1925) and F. W. K. Müller (1925) on the basis of photographs sent from the Moravian Mission at Leh. Their descriptions are not quite complete, as they had no information relating to the western face of the rock. Some supplementary observations made in 1932 can therefore be added to their account. I am much indebted to Mons. E. Benveniste and Professor Silvain Levi who have examined my photographs and notes.
>
> The Tang-tse rock is a large cubical mass of Ladak Granite, the surfaces of which are covered with a rich brown desert patina. In places, this patina has flaked away and no new patination appears to be taking place. In some parts of Indian Tibet, noticeably between Chushol and Pangur Tso, all the granite boulders give an appearance of having lost their patina; it must, however, be admitted that the most intense patina is found at the bottom of valleys, in closest proximity to whatever sources of water may have existed under the conditions accompanying its formation, so that such unpatinated rocks may never have had patination. The rock at Tang-tse is engraved on three faces. On the west face, there is a short Tokharian inscription, read by Professor Silvain Levi as "*tane wewimaruśasi*" the meaning of which is problematic. Below it, less deeply incised, and so apparently, though not actually, somewhat patinated, is a single Chinese character. At the end of the Tokharian inscription is a large cross patée.[23]

Hutchinson noted the problematic nature of the Tocharian inscription. Being presented in a journal devoted to the natural rather than the historical sciences, it attracted relatively little attention from church historians or historians of Central Asia. Indeed, no photograph of it appeared in print until 1983 when Geza Uray published Hutchinson's photo.[24] There will be more to say about this Tocharian inscription later.

Before turning to the variety of inscriptions, though, let us complete our review of geographical notices with a look at Major General Jagjit Singh's 1961 journey across the difficult Kay La Pass from Shakti to Tangtse as recounted in his memoirs. So treacherous did this journey prove to be that Singh dubbed it "The Key-La Folly":

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[22] HUTCHINSON 1936, 146-47.

[23] HUTCHINSON 1939, 172-74. BENVENISTE 1938 mentions the Tocharian inscription without giving further information. Levi is not known to have published any material relative to Tangtse.

[24] URAY 1983, plate XVII,A.

> Two routes led to Tangtse from Shakti; one via the Chang-La and the other via the Key-La. Of the two, the latter was the shorter route. When I mentioned this to my host, he strongly advised me to take the Chang-La route and not the latter. He had known of even the locals avoiding this route, he added. But in a spirit of uncalled for bravado, I did not accept his advice and at about 10 a.m. set out for Key-La.
>
> The initial going from Shakti was fairly reasonable. Then commenced the steep climb for the pass over 5050 meters high. The last lap meant walking almost at a snail pace. Even the sturdy pony and its owner halted, now and then, for breath. Taking a compass bearing and plotting it on my map, on finally reaching the top, well past mid-day, I roughly arrived at the general direction that I was to follow; there being no track, as such, to Tangtse. Further, looking down the hill I realised that it also meant walking over huge boulders of solid rock, for a few hundred meters to start with. Had I slipped moving down on one of them, I would have injured a limb or leg and thus would have headed fast to the military hospital at Leh, rather than to Hot Springs. The worst was yet to come. As dusk descended, it became even difficult to keep the right direction. Regrettably, I realised that my torch cells were weak, and it was with great difficulty that I was able to follow the foot-steps of wild yaks that apparently often took the Key-La route for Tangtse and beyond. In short, I reached my destination at about 8 p.m., after foot slogging for nearly 10 hours non-stop! Luckily, the Muslim Goba of Tangtse turned out to be a fine host, as the one at Shakti. He offered me a couple of pegs of rum and then a tasty preparation of goat meat. For my onward journey, next morning, he had also arranged two ponies, a riding pony, and a load carrying pony along with their owners to take me up to Phobrang, where the Gorkhas had a Platoon post.[25]

Summarizing the information from the various travel accounts, an attractive picture of Tangtse emerges. A village somewhat difficult of access yet welcoming to travelers. A village with sparse resources, yet with connections enough to the surrounding region to enable the gathering of supplies without undue difficulty. A village with horses, sheep, goats, yaks, grain and peas and water and fish. An abundance of garden vegetables is not to be expected at high altitudes. Given the dietary scruples of some Tibetans fish may have been off the menu for local residents as well, but the fish stock may have been taken advantage of by travelers. Returning to a point made earlier, we can imagine travelers at Tangtse in the middle ages gathering supplies, waiting for good weather, bargaining with local residents, and perhaps carving names and a few other particulars on a boulder near the outskirts of town.

[25] SINGH 2006, 95-97.

II. Summary of Inscriptions

What then of the inscriptions themselves? We have them in Sogdian, Arabic, Tibetan, Sharada script, Tocharian and evidently Chinese. To the extent that they have religious content at all, some of the Sogdian inscriptions may be Buddhist or monotheistic.

Nicholas Sims-Williams lists the Sogdian inscriptions and offers a rather full discussion. Rohit Vohra (following Werner Sundermann) offers a briefer summary of the contents. The list here follows the reading of Sims-Williams:[26]

1.. βz-'w, or yz-'w , = "increase"
2.. srδ pr 'δw 100 δs pr('š)ym c'ytr' sm'rknδc < šmny> nwš-prn ''s't ('z-γ-)'nt kw twp('y)t x'γ'n s'r, = "In the year 210, (we), Caitra of Samarkand, together with the monk Noshfarn, (were?) sent (as) messenger(s) to the Qaghan of Tibet" [[year 210 = possibly 841/2 CE]]
3.. xt(w)z̲-'ty, = "son of a judge" (personal name)
4.. sr'wš['r](t)y-'n, = "favor of Srōsh-art" (personal name)
5.. wry trx'n pr βγy (n)'m ''γt'ym, = (I), Urï Tarkhan, have come in the name of God"
6.. trx'n, = Tarkhan (personal name or title)
7.. βš'wn, = (personal name?)
8.. wry trx'n, "Urï Tarkhan" (personal name)
9.. ''zt [?] (m)w(y)[•]n z'δ'k (?) βz-[']w (?) (•k)wp (?) - - - hδ (?), = (no continuous reading is possible; letters partially obliterated)
10.. pw 'yn'y (?) c'ny (?) pr βγy n('m), = "… this (?) in the name of God"
11.. (c')ytr' (?), = "Caitra"? (personal name)
12.. (illegible), Vohra says it was earlier read by Sims-Williams as [swγδ]
13.. βγy - - - - (?) wyt'w <z'tk> (?) pwtyprn, = "(the) son (?) of Witāw, (grandson?) of Putti-farn"
14.. (illegible)

Sims-Williams indicates that Sogdian 1 can appropriately be described as Christian since it appears to be aligned with one of the crosses. He also indicates that Sogdian 2 is apparently Buddhist and that Sogdian 4 could be Manichaean. Sogdian 11 gives a Buddhist name as apparently does Sogdian 13. Vohra follows Sims-Williams in the interpretations of Sogdian 1, 2, and 4, and raises no objection to his interpretations of 11 and 13.

In his 1993 article Sims-Williams indicates that Sogdian 5 is monotheistic, and Vohra would further limit this to Christian or Jewish since the inscription does not use the Arabic formula "bismillah." On Vohra's interpretation, Sogdian 10

[26] SIMS-WILLIAMS 1993, 151-63 & plates 1-16. VOHRA 1992, 920-29. Sundermann's readings sometimes vary slightly from those of Sims-Williams.

could also be Christian or Jewish. In more recent correspondence, Sims-Williams notes that because the word order of the Sogdian "pr βγy n'm", (literally "in God's name") does not align with the Arabic word order of "bismillah" (literally, "in the name of God"), and because we know of Christian communities who habitually wrote in Sogdian, the phrase in inscriptions 5 and 10 is likely to have been Christian. At the same time, he points out that a letter in Sogdian sent by the Arab Amir Abd al-Rahman b. Subh contains the phrase "pr n'm βγy" (following the Arabic word order of the "bismillah" formula), so one cannot rule out the possibility that Sogdian 5 and 10 at Tangtse were written by a Muslim.[27] It seems best to describe Sogdian 5 and Sogdian 10 as simply monotheistic in character.

Sylvain Levi read the Tocharian inscription as "*tane wewimaruśasi*", but Hutchinson says the translation would be problematic. The photo Hutchinson provided to Uray is clear enough. Upon being consulted by the present writer, Douglas Q. Adams, author of a dictionary of Tocharian B, offered his opinion. His reading is "*tane werwimar iyātsi,*" which he suggests might mean, "Oh that I might here/now be hastening on [my] travels."[28] Adams suggests a date in the seventh century. A less poetic reading of the text might be, "Here I am, how I yearn to travel [on]." Either rendering would fit the setting of the Tangtse boulders as a place where travelers carved occasional notes to mark their passing, though the wording gives no clue as to whether the symbol immediately to the right is to be interpreted as a cross or as something else. To my eye, the lightly incised Chinese character underneath could be 忠, "zhōng," meaning "faithful, loyal, devoted, honest."[29] Whether this character should be read in connection with the Tocharian is hard to say.

The eight Arabic inscriptions (plus one other photographed but not discussed) published by Vohra [in translation but without transcription] are evidently Muslim, as the names and the subject matter seem to indicate:[30]

> (1) we remembered... Ziyād, client of Ḥāmid al-Baṣrī (or al-Naṣrī) – Cross & Tamgha adjacent

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27 Email from Nicholas Sims-Williams, dated 25 June 2013, citing SIMS-WILLIAMS and HAMILTON, and YAKUBOVICH.

28 ADAMS 2013. On "*tane*," meaning "here," see ADAMS 1999, 278. On the root "*wārw,*" the passive optative form of which means something like "urge one's self," "long for", or "seek after," see ADAMS 2013, with reference to MALZAHN 2010, 869-70. On "*iyātsi,*" the infinitive form of "*iyā*" (in turn derived from "*i*") meaning "to travel," see ADAMS 1999, 60 & 66.

29 Kurt Queller of the University of Idaho independently reached the same conclusion; email from Douglas Q. Adams, 15 May 2013.

30 VOHRA 1995, 419-29 & plates 1-13. Vohra relied upon the readings of Professor Werner Diem of Cologne. I thank Professor David Thomas of the University of Birmingham for reviewing this Arabic material and finding Diem and Vohra's readings to be plausible; email from David Thomas, 18 June 2013.

(2) [Illegible]
(3) Naṣr ibn Ṣālih, Abu Manṣūr, I/we recollected Muslim
(4) [Unclear]
(5) Bi-smi llāhi (In the name of God), Ḥamid/ḥamid, Allah
(6) Abū Layṭ
(7) Šabr/Šibr that
(8) Zakarīya ibn Qāsim , or "we remembered ibn Qasim"
(9) [No transcription or translation offered]

In a related article, Vohra mentioned two inscriptions in Sharada script, a variant of Brahmi script once common in Kashmir, as well as a variety of *tamgas*, marks of identification or ownership.[31] Only the longer of the two Sharada inscriptions is legible. Lore Sander's transcription and translation of it, totaling seven lines inside the outline of a stupa, is as follows:[32]

(1) ye tharmā he[tu]prabhavā hetu hetus=teṣyāṃ-=s-tathāga tā-[ya]/ teṣy[ā]ṃ ca yo nīrotha(ṃ) evamvādī mahāsravaṇā // deyatharmo=yaṃ mahāśrā[tho] upāsaka.. i[da ṃ] ascāla[pati] + sumanaśūrasya. = "Of all phenomena sprung from a cause the Tathagata has told about their cause and about their destruction. In such a way the great Śramaṇa has spoken. This is a religious gift, the deep reverence of a lay follower. This is for Ascālapati Sumanaśūra."
(2) [Inscription illegible]

Vohra also notes eight Tibetan inscriptions,[33] many with standard Tibetan Buddhist formulae, and provides a partial transcription and translation of one old four-line inscription in Tibetan:

Line 1.	Gus	Gus = reverence
Line 2	… m ma nog can mo rtse ba	rtse = pinnacle, summit
Line 3	Pho na 'di rnams kyi lha	pho na = messenger' lha = deity
Line 4	… l na skyon 'on no	'on no = arrive

The Tibetan inscription would apparently be Buddhist.

[31] VOHRA 1999, 279-303.
[32] SANDER 1994.
[33] VOHRA 1999, 279-303.

III. The Cross Motif

Travelers then, all from many lands and backgrounds, but what is to be made of the crosses? Cross motifs of varying design are among many designs found carved alongside rivers and pathways in the region,[34] and so need not always be understood as Christian. The crosses at Tangtse do have fairly distinctive shapes, and they are found there in association with different languages. One appears to be in close connection to a Sogdian inscription that may mean "peace." One is physically close to an inscription in Arabic though at a right angle to it, and should thus perhaps be taken as independent of the Arabic. Some of the crosses do not seem to be associated with any wording. One cross is immediately beside a Tocharian inscription. This last inscription, the one first noted by Hutchinson, is intriguing. If Sims-Williams is right about inscription 1 (in alignment with one of the crosses) being possibly Christian and about inscription 5 (without a cross) being monotheistic, what does Hutchinson's Tocharian inscription signify? The Tocharian inscription represents Tocharian B, that is, Kuchean. A great number of the surviving documents in Tocharian relate to Buddhism, but can the cross be taken as a Christian symbol here? If so, then at least one Tocharian speaker had acquaintance with Christianity.

The crosses have visual similarities with some Central Asian inscriptions and with examples known from South India and the Gulf region.[35] The cross without the floral base found beside the Tocharian inscription at Tangtse and the central cross on the main face of the boulder are similar to Christian tombstones from a later period at Issyk Kul exhibited by the Musee Guimet[36] and to some of the photographs published by Chwolson[37] and by Klein.[38] The two Tangtse crosses flanking the central cross on the main face of the boulder have floral or leaved bases and are generally similar to examples known from South India in about the eighth century at Mylapore and at the Valliapally Church in Kottayam,[39] as well as at Kaduthurtti. One difference here is that the Tangtse crosses lack the motif of the descending dove found on the South Indian exam-

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34 NEELIS 2011, 268-78. I thank Max Deeg for pointing me toward this work.

35 For a first attempt at devising a typology for crosses in the Church of the East, see DAUVILLIER 1956. More recently, see PARRY 1996.

36 NAU 1913, 25, no.16606. Nau's sketch does not give much detail, modern photographs are better. See also the sketch of another stone on 22, no.16601.

37 CHWOLSON 1890, especially 32, no.99.1 (136), with accompanying photo on Tafel II, upper left, and 71, no.41 (3), with accompanying photo on Tafel III, center left.

38 KLEIN 2000, 158, Grabstein 1, and Abb. 31.

39 WINCKWORTH 1929, 237-244, especially 241. GILLMAN and KLIMKEIT 1999, plates 10 & 11. For interpretation and background, see the studies cited in MUNDADAN 2001, 77-78, 103, 411, 422-24. For a history of attempts to read the inscription surrounding the Mylapore cross, see GIGNOUX 1995, 411-422. Most recently, CERETI, OLIVIERI, and VAZUTHANAPALLY 2002, 285-310. For broader discussion, see FRANZMANN, GARDNER, and PARRY 2012, 215-42, especially 237-40. Also, ANTHONY 2010.

ples.[40] Close parallels to the Tangtse crosses with floral or leaved base are found in Seventh Century cross designs at Failaka in present-day Kuwait, Jubail in Arabia, Ṣīr Banī Yās in present-day U.A.E., Kharg in present-day Iran, and Merv in present day Turkmenistan.[41] Of these, the closest parallel is with the cross at Failaka. To this group we should now also add the cross at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka from about the same time period.[42] The Tangtse crosses are also strikingly similar to some of the cross motifs on inscriptions known later from Quanzhou and published by Wu Wenliang and Wu Youxiong, notably B21, B42, B44, B45.[43] A cross drawn on the back of a Syriac document found at Turfan (9th to 13th centuries) should also be considered for comparison.[44]

Not all crosses found in the region are similar to the ones at Tangtse. Vohra reported that some crosses had been discovered by Klimkeit at a monastery in Alchi and on boulders along the Hunza river in Gilgit.[45] Alchi is on the Indus River about 70km downstream from Leh. Closer examination of Klimkeit's images from the monastery shows no similarity between those crosses and the ones from Tangtse.[46] Abbildung 1 (p. 359) has been thought to show a Manichaean or Buddhist cross of light as has Abbildung 4 (p.375), though these have been more recently interpreted as being symbols of lotus gardens.[47] Abbildung 6 (p.383) simply shows cross shapes as representing the masts of ships. As for the Gilgit crosses, in the Hunza Valley more than 400km farther away to the Northwest, Klimkeit does not finally attribute any Christian significance to them.[48] Instead, he sees them as simple symbols of magic or power placed near a ford in the river. In fact, these Gilgit crosses somewhat resemble the cross-shaped decorations in Tibetan manuscripts published by Geza Uray.[49] To my mind, the crosses at Hunza and in the Tibetan manuscripts are typologically

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40 BUTLER 1969, Arno Lehmann, notes the feature of the dove descending upon the top of the South Indian crosses. BUTLER 1970, notes an example of the descending dove motif from Ravenna and from St. John Lateran. Given the Pahlavi inscription surrounding the South Indian crosses, one wonders if there are any crosses with descending dove motif to be found in Mesopotamia or Persia.

41 BERNARD, CALLOT, and SALLES 1991. LANGFELDT 1994. KING 1997. GHIRSHMAN 1960. STEVE 2003, plates 9 & 10. HERRMANN 1998.

42 MIHINDUKULASURIYA 2011.

43 WU and WU 2005, items B21, B42, B44, B45.

44 Turfan SyrHT 99. I thank Erica C. D. Hunter for the reference.

45 VOHRA 1992, 921.

46 KLIMKEIT 1979b, 357-399.

47 In an email dated 18 June 2013 Sam Lieu notes that Neil Howard has identified the "cross of light" as a symbolic depiction of a lotus garden or lily pond. The lotus is of course a classic Buddhist image. LIEU 1992, 252-54, has a more traditional interpretation of the paintings at Alchi.

48 KLIMKEIT 1979a, original pagination 103-104 & Abb. 1 & Abb. 2.

49 URAY 1983, plate XVII,B (Pelliot tibétain 1676) and plate XVIII (Pelliot tibétain 1182). Photographs also available at the website of the INTERNATIONAL DUNHUANG PROJECT.

different from those found at Tangtse. With Klimkeit, I see no particular reason to attribute Christian significance to them. The cross-shaped decorations on tiles from Taxila and a small cross from Sirkap would appear to fall into the same uncertain category.[50]

IV. Conclusions

It is certain that not every cross found in Central Asia is Christian. However, given the geographical setting of Tangtse, with access to East, West, North, and South, and seeing the visual similarities with crosses found on Syriac tombstones in the region of Lake Balkash and in Quanzhou and with crosses found in the Gulf region and in some South Indian churches, perhaps the Tangtse crosses are not as far out of place as they might first appear. If we take note of Patriarch Timothy I's interest in opening up missions among the Tibetans in the late Eighth Century, the case for Christian influence could perhaps be made stronger.[51] Francke initially suggested that the crosses at Tangtse be understood as a powerful symbol that can be used for blessing and protection, but they may have a deeper significance. The three large crosses inscribed boldly on the main face of the first boulder certainly seem to be more than simple marks of identification or ownership, and they may well represent something more than a generalized desire for blessing and protection as well. Within the Church of the East carving or marking the sign of the cross on a building or surface is understood as invoking the grace of Christ on that place.[52]

Without suggesting the presence of a settled community of Christians at Tangtse, the crosses can be viewed within the larger context of travelers' marks along the road, either as a general petition for success and protection on the journey, or more specifically within a Christian context as an invocation of Christ's blessing. All the same, the uncertainty of the inscribed texts and the variety of languages in close connection to most of the crosses at Tangtse suggests that final judgment on their significance should be cautious.

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50 For Taxila, see GILLMAN and KLIMKEIT 1999, 329, n.19, also Plate 30. A photograph and critique of the Sirkap cross may be found at RASHID 2013. For a cautionary note on these finds, see ROONEY 1984 & 2007.

51 Timothy's letter XLI to the monks of the monastery of Mar Maron, mentions the recitation of the *Trisagion* hymn among Indians, Chinese, Tibetans, and Turks; see, BIDAWID 1956, 33, & 117. Likewise, Timothy's letter XLVII to Sergius, Metropolitan of Elam, mentions his plans to ordain a bishop for Tibet among other places; see *Ibid.*, 36-37, 71, 85; also BRAUN 1901, 299-313, esp.308-311. English text of Letter XLVII in BROCK 1997, 245-51.

52 This line of interpretation, prompted by a question from Max Deeg, was further explicated for me by Mar Awa Royel at the Fourth Salzburg Conference on the Church of the East.

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Plates

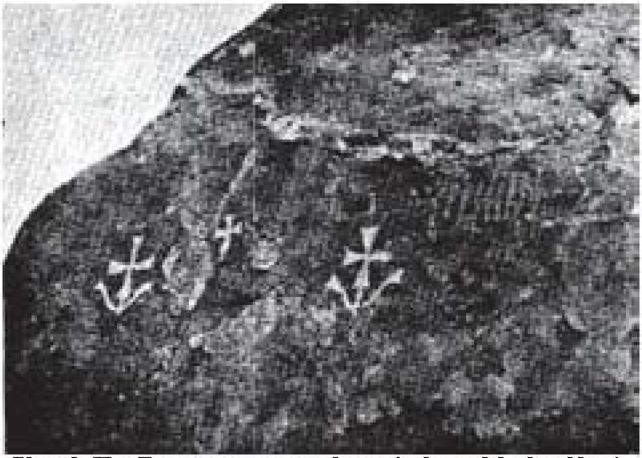

Plate 1. The Tangtse crosses on the main face of the boulder in 1976. (after GERGAN and GERGAN). Sogdian inscription 1 is directly above the cross on the right. Further to the right is Sogdian inscription 2

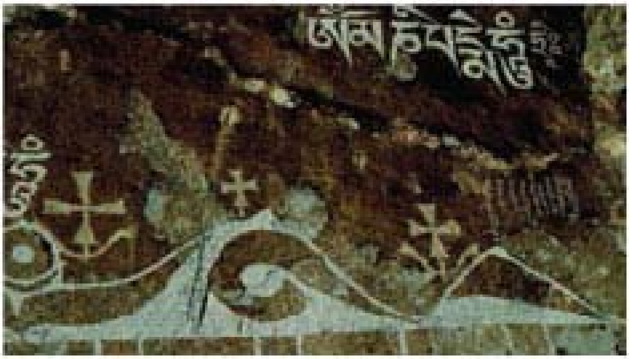

Plate 2. The Tangtse crosses on the main face of the boulder in 2005. (after Romesh Bhattacharji). Sogdian inscription 1 is directly above the cross on the right. Further to the right is Sogdian inscription 2

Plate 3. The Tocharian Inscription on the West face of the boulder (after Uray, 1983).

A Rock near Drangtse, west side (courtesy Prof. Hutchinson)

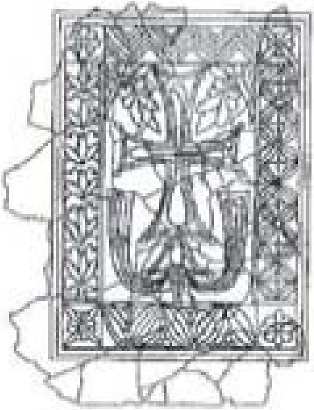

Plate 4. The cross motif at Failaka (after BERNARD, CALLOT, and SALLES, Fig. 15). Height 83 cm, width 61 cm.

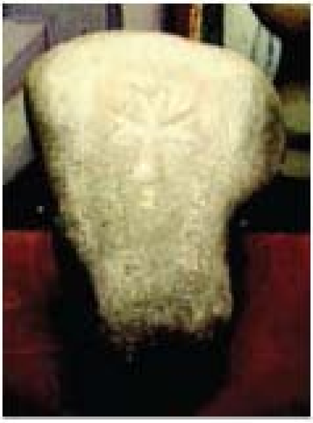

Plate 5. The cross motif at Issyk Kul (from Wikimedia Commons).

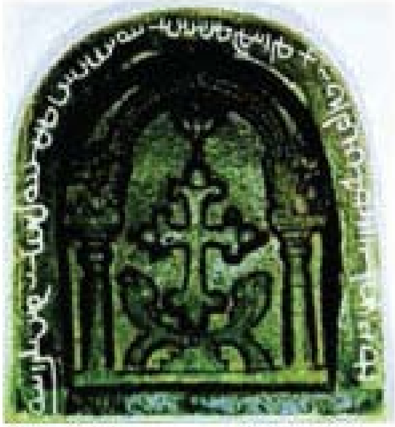

Plate 6, The cross motif at Mylapore, South India

Plate 7, The cross motif at Quanzhou (after WU and WU 2005, B44.)

Plate 8, Cross drawn on back of Turfan SyrHT 99 (Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries)

COMMEMORATING THE SAINTS AT TURFAN[1]

Erica C. D. HUNTER
School of Oriental and African Studies, UK

Between 1904 and 1907 the Second and Third *German Turfan Expeditions* discovered over five hundred Syriac manuscript fragments at the monastery site of Bulayïq at Turfan. These were brought back to Berlin where they are currently housed in various repositories.[2] Many of the fragments appear to come from the Ḥudrā, the principal liturgical book of the Church of the East.[3] Whilst most exemplars are just a folio or part of a folio, MIK III/45 consists of 61 folios. Regrettably, it is incomplete and lacks a colophon. Its actual title is unknown, but on the basis of the quire pattern of 14-16 leaves, MIK III/45 might have originally run to some 200+ folios. Cross-references indicate that the complete manuscript appears to have covered the daily offices and Eucharist for the entire liturgical year. A wealth of information on the commemoration of the saints in the liturgy of the Church of the East at Turfan can be gleaned from MIK III/45 fol. 1a-21a: *Offices for the Rogation*, consisting of six Fridays (fol. 1-7r) and *Offices of the Saints* (fol. 7r-21v). Dated between 771and 884, on the basis of C14 tests, MIK III/45 is thus a major addition to the relative paucity of liturgical materials that can be reliably allocated to the first millennium.[4] This paper uses MIK III/45 and a selection of Syriac fragments, to focus on the commemoration in the liturgy of various saints, both male and female. Their commemorations

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[1] The author is grateful to the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussicher Kulturbesitz* for access and permission to reproduce images of the relevant fragments. All images are copyright *Depositum der Berlin Brandenburgischer Akademie der Wissenschaften in der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin* – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteihing. Low resolution images of the Syr HT signature numbers are available on the International Dunhuang Project website (http:id.bl.uk/ enter the signature number in the search box). She also thanks Dr. J.F. Coakley for discussion and advice about various points.

[2] For further details about these expeditions see LE COQ 1928. The manuscript repositories in Berlin are: the *Staatsbibliothek* (Potsdamer Platz); the *Museum für Asiatische Kunst* in Dahlem, The *Turfanforschung*, which is in the headquarters of the BBAW (*Berlin-Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften*) in Jaeger Strasse.

[3] MACOMBER 1970, 120. *Ḥudrā* "cycle", a term that came into usage in the tenth century, post-dates MIK III/45. Whilst the manuscript identifies itself as a *Fenqitha* "volume", *Ḥudrā* has been used throughout this chapter, to avoid confusion with the term *Penqitho* "volume" that became synonymous with the West Syrian tradition.

[4] For a survey of the materials that date from the 1st millennium, see BROCK 2004, 9-54 and in particular, his comment on. p. 11: "the paucity of East Syriac liturgical texts that definitely date from the first millennium renders every scrap of evidence all the more valuable".

embedded the Church of the East within the martyrological and ascetical strata of the early Church, but simultaneously attest the memory and cult of saints as an integral part of the liturgy and life at Turfan.

Commemorating Mart Shir, Mar BarShabba and Zarvandokht (MIK III/45 fol. 7r-13r)

The *Orders of service observed on weeks of the feasts of saints. Offices of the Saints* [MIK III/45 fol. 7r-21r] commences with the commemoration of Mart Shir, Mar BarShabba and Zarvandokht. As such, it highlights the Church of the East's robust Central Asian heritage that was transmitted to Turfan. Mart Shir's role, as the evangelist who introduced Christianity to Marv is designated by the rubric lemma: **ܩܕܡܝܬ ܒܫܒܘܥܐ ܕܡܪܬ ܫܝܪ ܐܘܢܓܠܣܛܐ "First, in the week of Mart Shir the evangelist"** (fol. 7r ll.13-14) that introduces the commemoration of the three saints during the *'onyata* (anthems/hymns) of the Evening office which took place on the eve of their commemorative festival.

The liturgy extols the achievements of the trio in bringing Christianity to Marv in touching and sensitive imagery, likening the three saints to an eagle and two doves:

Fol. 12r ll.3-6

ܒܚܝܠܗ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܢܦܩܘ ܘܐܬܘ ܬܠܬܝܗܘܢ ܝܗܒܘ
ܣܒܪܬܗ ܠܡܪܘ ܢܫܪܐ ܒܪܫܒܐ ܘܫܝܪ ܘܙܪܘܢܕ.
ܘܟܬ ܝܘ̈ܢܐ ܩܢܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܒܡܪܘ ܦܪ̈ܘܓܐ
ܡܥܡܕ̈ܐ ܕܡܙܡܪܝܢ

In the power of Jesus they went out and came, the three of them. They gave His gospel to Marv. The eagle Bar Shabba, and Shir and Zarvandokht, the doves. The nest <is> the church in Marv. The chicks <are> the baptized who sing.

The ornithological metaphor is extended to the church and community that they established at Marv, likening it to a nest where fledglings were raised. The imagery is expressive, but specific mention is made of their place of origin, i.e. Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the twin-city capital of the Sassanid Empire:

Fol. 11v ll.26-fol. 12r l.1

ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܝܘ̈ܢܐ ܘܚܕ ܢܫܪܐ ܦܪܚܘ ܘܐܬܘ ܡܢ
ܣܠܝܩ ܘܩܛܝܣܦܘܢ[1] ܘܡܛܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܠܡܪܘ ܒܡܫ̈ܡܫܢܘܬܗܘܢ,
ܕܝܠܡܐ ܙܪܥܘ ܘܦܪܚܘ ܦܪ̈ܘܓܐ ܕܡܙܡܪܝܢ ܠܬܫܒܘܚܬܗ ܕܡܪܢܐ

Two doves and one eagle flew and came <from> Seleucia and Qtesiphon; they made a nest in the branches of the cross. The chicks grew, and flew who were singing praises of the Lord.

Overt references are made to the royal status of Mart Shir employing graphic imagery and contrasting her eschewal of a life of material privilege for greater rewards:

Fol. 13v l.11-15

ܠܘܡܫܒܚܬܐ ܫܝܪ ܡܠܟܬܐ ܡܢ ܦܠܛܝܢ ܢܦܩܬ
ܗܘܬ ܘܫܒܩܬ ܬܓܗ ܘܐܝܩܪܗ ܘܪܚܡܬ ܠܡܠܟܐ
ܫܡܝܢܐ ܗܝܡܢܬ ܠܡܠܬܗ ܕܦܪܘܩܢ ܕܐܝܢܐ
ܕܫܒܩ ܩܢܝܢܗ ܦܪܥ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ ܚܕ ܒܡܐܐ
ܘܐܪܬ ܚܝܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ

Blessed Queen Shir went out from the palace and left her diadem and honoured state. And she loved the heavenly king. She believed the word of her Saviour, "Whoever leaves his property I will reward a hundredfold and he will inherit eternal life".

The eulogies of her martyrdom that deliberately liken her with Christ at his crucifixion, also manifest Mart Shir's royal connections:

Fol. 12v l.11-18

ܡܐ ܫܒܝܚ ܗܘ ܬܓܐ ܘܗܕܝܪ ܟܠܝܠܐ ܕܓܕܠ ܪܘܚ
ܩܘܕܫܐ ܘܣܡܬܗ ܒܪܫܗ ܕܡܠܟܬܐ ܫܝܪ
ܘܟܡܐ ܪܘܙܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܕܚܐܪܬܐ ܒܓܘܕܐ ܕܫ̈ܠܝܚܐ
ܘܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܘܣܗ̈ܕܐ ܘܡܘܕܝ̈ܢܐ ܚܠܦ ܥܪܣܐ
ܕܡ̈ܠܟܐ ܕܐܪܦܝܬ ܝܬܒܐ ܒܟܘܪܣܝܐ ܫܒܝܚܐ
ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܝܡܝܢ ܚܬܢܐ ܕܪܘܡܐ
ܒܗ̇ ܡܫܬܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܫܪܒܐ

How glorious is the diadem and beautiful the crown that the Holy Spirit has plaited and puts on the head of Queen Shir. And how much her noble soul rejoices with the band of apostles and priests and martyrs and confessors. In place of the bed of kings that she has forsaken (?), she sits on a splendid throne in the kingdom at the right hand of the bridegroom of high heaven, at that feast that

does not pass away.

The liturgical excerpts are an invaluable source of information, as no hagiography of Mart Shir has survived. She is, however, mentioned in several fragments of the *Life of Bar Shabba* that were found at Turfan; two in Christian Sogdian,[5] and a bifolium in Syriac.[6] In Sebastian Brock's opinion these texts represent a considerably fuller form of the tenth century Arabic *Chronicle of Seert* narrative about Mar BarShabba that names Mart Shir as the erstwhile sister-wife of the Sassanid monarch Shapur. The *Chronicle of Seert* narrates how the queen Širrān (Shiraran) was tormented by a demon but none of the professionals who were summoned could effect a cure; a vignette that has overtones of Daniel V:7-12. Having a dream on two consecutive nights that she would be healed if she became a Christian, the queen requested that Mar BarShabba who was in the royal capital, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, should attend her. Upon her baptism the demon departed Mart Shir, but her conversion, which contravened the norms governing the royal Zoroastrian household, enraged her husband who demanded that she worship the sun or be killed. Fortunately, he relented and gave his sister-wife to the Marzban of Merv who was given permission to marry her, but was also instructed to keep her from 'bad company' i.e. the Christians.

Exiled to Merv, Mart Shir became the first preacher of Christianity, apparently with some success amongst the local inhabitants whom the *Chronicle of Seert* specified as being of Greek origin, having come with Alexander's conquest.[7] Mart Shir also oversaw the building of a church, which she may have endowed with her own funds, but "not knowing what plan to give it, the architects followed the model of the royal palace, even giving it the name "Ktesiphon".[8] Mart Shir as the 'bringer of Christianity to Marv' may have marked the first stage of conversion process, i.e. a royal personage accepting Christianity and passing it on to the populace. However, despite her royal status, Mart Shir could not effect the organization of the church for such tasks could have only fall within the remit of a bishop. It is for this reason that as the *Chronicle of Seert* notes, Mart Shir, prior to her departure from the Sassanian capital, took the precaution to have Mar BarShabba consecrated as a bishop by his fellow-bishops.

The second stage, detailing the organization of the church at Merv, is embedded in an episode that seems out of keeping with the overall tenor of the *Chronicle of Seert*. When Mart Shir had a son by the Marzban, she wrote this news back to Shapur but also asked him to send Mar BarShabba since her erstwhile illness

5 SIMS WILLIAMS 2012, 76-77 for E24/7-11. BROCK 1995, 190 notes that the Christian Sogdian texts are close renderings of the Syriac version, which probably provided the *Vorlage*. See also BROCK 2011, 259-260 for the stemma of the life of Mar BarShabba.

6 For the Syriac hagiography, SyrHT 45-46 (T II B 9 no.3) see POLOTSKY 1934, 559-64.

7 BROCK 1995, 192 and n.7. See SCHER & DIB 1910, 254, also SACHAU 1918, 399-409.

8 BROCK 1995, 193.

had returned. It is interesting that, despite Shapur's wrath against his sister-wife, which culminated in her banishment to the furthest outpost of his vast empire, Mar BarShabba's activities do not appear to have been constrained. He duly arrived at Merv with "priests, deacons, liturgical books and ornaments";[9] a process that was undoubtedly repeated when the monastery at Turfan was established. Arriving at the city, he set about consecrating the altar of the church endowed by Mart Shir and also consecrated new churches to meet the demand of the growing numbers who were being baptized into the faith throughout Khorasan.[10] At this point, it appears that Mar BarShabba established some type of church organization at Merv and possibly also cemented official links with the patriarchate in the Sassanid capital. Reputed to be the first bishop of Merv and traditionally credited as the founder of the Christian church in Central Asia, presumably it was in this capacity that Mar BarShabba's fame spread to Turfan.[11]

In contrast to Mart Shir and Mar BarShabba, the person of Zarvandokht "daughter of Zarvan" remains enigmatic. Her Middle Persian name reveals her Zoroastrian origins.[12] However, as the Syriac onomastica on the eighth century Xi'an Fu stele attest, Christians did continue to sport names with distinct Persian etymologies, even after conversion.[13] Her Persian-Zoroastrian background is possibly corroborated by an Armenian source which names a certain Zrovandavt as the daughter of Shapur II and wife of the Armenian king Kosrow III.[14] The *Chronicle of Seert* mentions a woman named Zarndoukht as the daughter of Khošken, the *aspahid* (governor) of Khurasan who married, on the order of Shapur, his sister.[15] She was the daughter of Šir(arân) and, like her husband, was sympathetic to Christians. However, the *Chronicle of Seert* states that Zarndoukht was not herself a Christian but is explicitly cited as being Zoroastrian, as was her father.[16] Whether the woman in the Armenian source and the *Chronicle of Seert* relate to the same Zarvandokht as MIK III/45 is difficult to discern, but from her inclusion in the commemorative liturgy she must have been a Christian. In MIK IIII/45, no reference is made to Zarvandokht's es-

9 BROCK 1995, 193.

10 For the spread of Christianity in Khorasan and Central Asia see HUNTER 1992, 362-8; HUNTER 1996, 129-42 and the important article by FIEY1979.

11 BROCK 1995, 200 points out that in the Syrian Orthodox Life of the saint, Mar BarShabba is elevated to the status of a metropolitan, but this is clearly incorrect given that the signatories from Merv at the synods held in 424, 486 and 497 all designated themselves as bishops. SIMS WILLIAMS 1988, 823 has described this legend as a "pious fiction woven around his name as a result of local patriotism".

12 See JULLIEN *et. al.* 2009, 151-2.

13 See HUNTER, 2010, 357-69; also HUNTER 2009, 80-1. For Christian-Zoroastrian interaction in 6th century Mesopotamia, see JULLIEN 2015, 175-193.

14 JUSTI 1895 lists the name referring to the name in Faustus Byz. 6.1 (261, 23).

15 BROCK 1995, 193.

16 SCHER & DIB 1910, 258.

chewal of royal privilege and luxury, although one may assume that her social standing and life-style was similar to that of Mart Shir, with whom she is always mentioned in conjunction. Despite their differences, what the three sources do intimate is that a woman called Zarvandokht had aristocratic or royal connections to the Sassanid court; possibly she was a lady-in-waiting to the queen.

MIK III/45 clearly acknowledges the prowess of Mar BarShabba, Mart Shir and Zarvandokht in embedding Christianity amongst the people of Merv and calls upon the protection of their prayers:

Fol. 12v ll.24-27

ܟܐܢ̈ܐ ܕܙܟܘ ܒܐܓܘܢܐ ܡܪܝ، ܒܪܫܒܐ ܘܫܝܪ
ܘܙܪܘܢܕܘܟܬ ܕܠܐܝܘ ܗܘܐ ܒܣܒܪܬܐ ܘܐܦܢܝܘ
ܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܡܢ ܛܘܥܝܝ ܠܫܪܪܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ
ܨܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܫܘܪܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܢ ܘܬܛܪܢ ܡܢ ܒܝܫܐ

The just who have been victorious in the struggle, Mar BarShabba and Shir and Zarvandokht who laboured in your gospel and turned nations from error to the truth of their faith – let their prayer be a bulwark to us and it may keep us from the Evil One.

Furthermore, a reference that occurs in the morning service for the week commemorating Mart Shir, *viz*: ܥܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܓܠܘܣܩܘܡܐ ܒܛܟܣܗ "the *'onyata* of the shrine in its order" (fol. 7b l.12) might intimate a reliquaryrelics of the erstwhile evangelist queen.[17]

Commemorating Mar Cyriacus and Julitta (SyrHT 140)

Pope Gelasius declared the martyrdoms of Julitta and her son Mar Cyriacus to be spurious in the decree which he issued in 495/6, but the stories of the gruesome deaths of the mother and her infant son, who purportedly received their crowns at Tarsus in 304, had become deeply embedded in the Christian *oikumene*. Their hagiographies were translated into a bevy of languages, including Sogdian.[18] No Syriac *Passio* has been found at Turfan, but the memory of Mar Cyriacus and Julitta is commemorated in several liturgical fragments, the most notable being SyrHT 140. SyrHT 140 is a single leaf, measuring 15.0 x 11.6 cm, with 16 or 17 lines per side.[19] The upper and lower margins of the leaf have

17 PAYNE SMITH 1903, 70 defines this Greek loanword in Syriac as "*a case, money-box, coffin*, esp. a case wherein the remains of saints were preserved, *a shrine, a reliquary*".

18 See SIMS-WILLIAMS 2013, 235-9.

19 For a full description of SyrHT 140, see HUNTER & DICKENS 2014, 151-2.

been lost, as has one of the side margins. The sporadically punctuated text has been written in a typical East Syriac Estrangela hand. Partial textual parallels to the fragment are found in two much later sources: (a) Add. 1980 (University Library, Cambridge), fol. 398(a)-408(a), dated to 1723, which William Wright described as a Gazzā[20] and (b) the Darmo edition of the Ḥudrā, vol. III that was compiled largely using manuscripts post 16th century.[21]

SyrHT 140, Add 1980 and the Darmo Ḥudrā are distinguished by many textual variants, but the three converge at the point which details the martyrdom of Mar Cyriacus:

SyrHT 140 side (b) ll.3-9[22]

3 ܒܩܕܪܐ ܕܡܠܘܗܝ، ܙܦܬܐ ܫܓܪܘ ܗܘ[ܘ]

4 ܘܐܪܡܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܠ[ܡܪ]ܩܘܪܝܩܘܣ ܣܗܕܐ ܕܗܘܐ [ܘܡܫܒܚܐ]

5 ܘܐܒܗܬܬ ܐ[ܢܘܢ] ܠܪ̈ܕܘܦܘܗܝ، ܟܕ ܠܒܫ ܟܠܝܠܐ ܕܙܟ[ܘ]ܬܐ][ ]

6 ܣܓܕܬܐ ܒܩܠܗ ❖ [illegible] ❖ ܒܩܕܪ[ܐ ܕܙܦܬ]

7 ܘܟܕ ܪܬܚ ܐܫܬܒܗܪܘ، ܒܢ̈ܝ ܥܘܠܐ ܘܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕܪ ܐ[ܢܘܢ]

8 ܠܡܪܩܘܪܝܩܘܣ ܘܠܝܘܠܝܛܐ ܨܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܫܘܪܐ ܬܗܘ[ܐ]

9 ܠܢ ܘܬܛܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܪ̈ܘܕܐ ❖

l. 3 in the cauldron which they filled {with} pitch, they heated ...
l. 4 and they cast Mar Cyriacus the glorious [martyr] .... .

l. 5 But you shamed his persecutors when the crown of victory was borne ...

l. 6 Worshipping ... By the chant. **RUBRIC ...** In the cauldron [of pitch] ...

l. 7 And whilst it heated, the sons of perdition boasted. But Christ aided

l. 8 Mar Cyriacus and Julitta. Let their prayer be a bulwark

l. 9 for us and protect us from the rebellious

In the Syriac *Passio,* the pagan priests filled a cauldron with a variety of ingredients: pitch, nafta, wax, sulfur, resin, copper and iron.[23] Add. 1980, Darmo

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[20] WRIGHT 1901, vol I, p. 147 describes the manuscript which was written in "large, clear Nestorian characters" and dated 2034 i.e. 1723 CE, as a Gazzā ('Treasury') of canons, hymns and prayers for festivals and the commemoration of saints according to the use of the Dairā 'Ellaitā of Mār Gabriel and Mār Abraham at Mosul.

[21] DARMO 1960-1962, vol. III asrt-hmrt (p. 661-677).

[22] Grey highlights indicate textual convergence with Add. 1980 and DARMO 1960-1962 vol. III asrt-hmrt (p. 661-677).

[23] DILLMANN 1887, 340 for references to the Syriac versions of the *Passio*, which include a manuscript in the Vatican which was described by ASSEMANI 1719 vol. 1, p. 607; vol. III, 1

Ḥudra and SyrHT 140 all articulate Mar Cyriacus' 'crowning' in the cauldron of hot pitch, with the Turfan fragment graphically encapsulating the 'psychological tension' between martyr and persecutors, viz: ܘܐܒܗܬܬ ܐ[ܢܘܢ] ܠܪ̈ܕܘܦܘܗܝ ܟܕ ܠܒܫ ܟܠܝܠܐ ܕܙܕܝܩ[ܘܬܐ] "you shamed his persecutors when the crown of righteousness was borne" (SyrHT 140 side (b), l. 5). Unlike the narrative in the Syriac *Passio*, where Julitta initially baulked when she and her son were to be thrown into the cauldron but was bolstered by the latter's words, SyrHT 140 does not explicitly mention her martryrdom.[24] However, the invocation: ܨܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܫܘܪܐ ܬܗ[ܘܐ] ܠܢ ܘܬܛܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܪ̈ܘܕܐ "let their prayer be a bulwark for us and protect us from the rebellious ones" (SyrHT 140 side (b), ll. 8-9) upholds Mar Cyriacus and Julitta as martyrs.

Parallel text which occurs between SyrHT 140 and the *qale de-'onyata sahide* "Martyrs' Anthems/Hymns" an early work, mentioning various martyrs, also draws attention to the prophylactic capabilities of mother and son.[25]

- SyrHT 140, side (a) ll. 3-4 referring to David and Saul (I Samuel 18)[26] [ܕ]ܛܪܬܗ ܠܕܘܝܕ ܛܠܝܐ ܡܢ [ܫܐܘ]ܠ ܗ̣ܝ ܬܛܪ ܥܕܬܐ ܒܨܠܘܬ ܡܪ̈ܝܐ ܣܗ̈ܕܐ ܩܘܪܝܩܘܣ ܘܝܘܠܝܛ[ܐ] "you protected David from Saul. May you protect the church through the prayer of Mar Cyriacus and Julitta"
- SyrHT 140, side (a) ll. 9 – 12 Moses' striking of the rock to discharge water (Exodus 17: 1-7)[27] ܡܘܫܐ ܪܫܐ [ܕܥܒ̈ܪܝܐ] ܐܪܕܝ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܡܢ ܟܐܦܐ ܘܐܫܩܝ ܠܥܡܐ [ܟܦܘܪܐ ܥܡܐ] ܗܟܢ ܢܪ̈ܕܘܢ ܓܪ̈ܡܝܗܘܢ ܠܩܘܪܝܩܘ[ܣ] ... ܠܒܢ̈ܝܢܫܐ "Moses, the leader of the [Hebrew] made water flow from the rock and gave to the ungrateful nation to drink. Likewise may the bones of Mar Cyriacus discharge … for mankind"

These quotations from the *Thirteenth qale for the morning of the first Sunday,*[28] have been inserted into the commemoration and function as *paradigmgebeten* that have been adapted specifically to the martyrs' context. In SyrHT 140, the protection offered 'by grace' to David in I Samuel 18 has been transferred to the

p. 19 and another manuscript held by the *Royal Asiatic Society* in London. WRIGHT 1871, vol. II, x describes this manuscript consisting of 188 leaves as "written in a good, regular, Nestorian hand, with many vowel-points and dated… A. Gr. 1880, A.D. 1569". He supplies a listing of contents noting on p. xii the martyrdom of Cyriacus and Julitta (fol. 173a).

24 DILLMANN 1887, 344.

25 In the Darmo Ḥudrā, this follows the Psalter. See DARMO 1960-1962 vol. I, p. 420 *sqq*.

26 See DARMO 1960-1962 vol. I, p. 453, l. ll. 7-8. The author thanks Mr. Steven Ring (Birmingham) for drawing her attention to this reference.

27 See DARMO 1960-1962 vol. I, p. 453, l. ll.7-8.

28 See *Qale de-'Onyata Sahide* "Chants of the Martyrs' Anthems" in DARMO 1960-1962 vol. I, p. 453 *sqq*.

church. Whereas Moses in Exodus 17: 1-7 releases the life-giving water, in SyrHT 140 this role is transferred to the bones of Mar Cyriacus to emanate some type of discharge. However, the text is incomplete at this point.

The protective capacities of Mar Cyriacus and his mother *viz*: ܛܪ ܥܡܐ ܕܙܕ[ܝܩܘܬܐ] ܡܢ ܪ̈ܕܘܦܘܗܝ ܕܫܪܪܐ "protect the nation of [righteousness] from the persecutors of truth" (SyrHT 140 side (b) ll.11-12) echo the common plea ܣܗ̈ܕܐ ܒܥܘ ܪ̈ܚܡܐ ܡܢ ܡܪܐ ܕܟܠ ܥܠ ܥܠܡܐ (MIK III/45 fol. 19r ll.1-2) "O martyrs, ask mercy from the Lord of all upon the world that by your prayers we may be protected" (MIK III/ 45 fol. 19v ll.1-2). These quotations highlight the vital and vibrant potency of the martyrs' prayers in the heart of the liturgy. Furthermore, the reference to the life-giving powers of Mar Cyriacus' bones might allude to a reliquary cult at Turfan, as has been suggested re Mart Shir. However there is a textual lacuna at this point and SyrHT 140 supplies no further insight into any such commemoration at the monastery. Yet, the remembrance of mother and son does not appear to have been singular to Turfan and seems to have been celebrated throughout Central Asia. As late as the 11th century, the renowned Muslim polymath Muhammad al-Bīrūni, writing about the rituals of the Christians at Khwarazm, noted that the commemoration of Mar Cyriacus and Julitta took place on 15th Tammuz.[29]

Commemorating Mar Sargis and Mar Bacchus (MIK III/45 fol. 13a-21b and n394)

The martyrdoms of the Roman soldiers Mar Sargis and Mar Bacchus who met their deaths in the fourth century at Resafe (Sergiopolis) in eastern Syria were internationally renowned and as Elizabeth Key-Fowden has commented, "S. Sergius evolved into one of eastern Christianity's greatest defenders … [i]n Syria and Mesopotamia".[30] When and where Mar Sargis' martyrdom was incorporated into the Syriac liturgy is unknown, but this presumably happened at an early date. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the martyrs' fame travelled all the way with the Church of the East to Turfan where their names are recalled in several liturgical fragments.

- SyrHT 155 is an incomplete fragment of 19 lines from the Hudra, possibly a commemoration.[31] Side (b) ll.4-5. ܒܪܗܘܡܝܐ … [ܡܪܝ] ܡܪܝ ܣܪܓܝܣ ܘܡܪܝ ܒܟܘܣ "In the Roman Empire … [Mar] Sargis and Mar Bacchus".

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[29] BĪRŪNĪ 1879, 296. Today, the saints' annual festival falls on 15th July in the calendars of both the Church of the East and the Chaldaean Catholic Church. The author thanks The Rev. Khoshaba Georges (Ancient Assyrian Church of the East) for this information on the commemoration of the martyrs in the East Syrian tradition. For the Chaldaean breviary, see BEDJAN 1938, vol. 3, p. 482.

[30] KEY-FOWDEN 1999, 28-9.

[31] See description in HUNTER & DICKENS 2014, 172-3.

- SyrHT 258, an upper part of a folio, with appears to be a commemoration of St. George with a reference to Sargis on side (a) 1.9.[32]
- SyrHT 385, a small partial folio (6.4. x 4.1cm), 6 lines, i.e. 'booklet' size[33] alludes to the martyrdom on side (a) ll.5-6 ܩܪܝܢܘܬܗ ܕܡ ... ܡܪܝ ܣܪܓܝܣ ܘܡܪܝ ... ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܟܠܝܠ ... ܘܟܦܢܐ "the Invocation [of Mar] Sargis and Mar [Bacchus] … Christ who the crown? … and thirsting/famine?" and on side (a) l. 1 ܕܐܬܩܛܠܘ ܡܛܠ ܗܘ "who were killed because …".

The contents of the fragments are too scant to draw wider conclusions, yet it is clear that the saints' memories were upheld at Turfan.

Perhaps the most important reference to Mar Sargis occurs in MIK III/45 which introduces his commemoration by the rubric lemma ܬܘܒ ܫܒܘܥܐ ܕܛܘܒܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܣܪܓܝܣ ܣܗܕܐ ܢܨܝܚܐ "Next the week of the blessed Mar Sargis the victorious martyr" (fol. 13a ll.24-5). This occurs in the *Orders of service observed on weeks of the feasts of saints. Offices of the Saints* [fol. 7r-21r] that forms the bulk of the contents of MIK III/45 [fol. 1a-21a], where it immediately follows the aforementioned commemoration of Mart Shir, Mar BarShabba and Zarvandokht. The sequence of Mar Sargis and Mar Bacchus' commemoration following that of Mar BarShabba also occurs in n.164, a partial folio composed of three dislocated fragments from the same folio of the Sogdian gospel lectionary E5 which was written in Syriac script.[34] Its contents consist of a quotation of Matthew 25:45-46 being the end of the Gospel for the Commemoration of Barshabba and Matthew 16:24-17:6 being the beginning of the Gospel for the Commemoration of Sargis and Bacchus. The Syriac rubric lemma and the incipit of Matthew 16:24 are supplied viz: ll. 5-6 ◆ ܕܡܪܝ ܣܪܓ[ܝ]ܣ ܘ ◆ ܒܟܘܣ ◆◆ ܡܬܝ ◆ . "Of Mar Sargis and <Mar> Bacchus. Matthew". The contents of n164, which is housed in the Turfanforschung, Berlin, are truncated, but are immensely valuable in supplying the accompanying Gospel reading.

The much longer text in MIK III/45 fol. 13v-21r focuses on the martyrdom of Mar Sargis (as in the *Passio*, Mar Bacchus, 'the chaste', assumes a secondary, incidental role) and provides explicit details of the tortures that he was obliged to endure when he was forced to put on shoes spiked on the inside with long nails and run before a chariot.

MIK III/45 Fol. 18v ll.19-22; fol. 19r ll.3-7

ܗܘ ܐܟܪܐ ܘܡܥܐ ܕܕܘܩܠܛܝܢܘܣ ܕܗܦܪܟܐ ܪܗܛܐ

[32] See description in HUNTER & DICKENS 2014, 249-50.
[33] See description in HUNTER & DICKENS 2014, 339-40.
[34] SIMS-WILLIAMS 2012, 41 provides a description and also details of publications of these fragments, also corrections to readings.

ܪܚܡܐ ܣܪܓܝܣ ܘܢܟܦܐ ܒܟܘܣ ܕܒܪ̈ܨܦܐ ܢܨܚܘ
ܙܟܘܬܐ ܕܒܡܣܝܒܪܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܬܗܪܘ ܗܘܘ ܥܝܪ̈ܐ ܘܚܒܪ
ܣܛܢܐ ܘܚܝܠܗ ܐܬܒܗܬ ܗܠܠܘܝܐ ...
ܣܟܘ ܪ̈ ܓܠܘܗܝ ܕܢܨܝܚܐ ܣܪܓܝܣ
ܘܐܪܗܛܘܗܝ ܒܣܘܚܐ ܩܕܡ ܡܪ̈ܟܒܬܗܘܢ
ܘܐܪܘܚ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܦܣ̈ܥܬܗ ܘܠܐ ܙܥܘ ܩܘ̈ܪܨܝ
ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܢܣܝܘܢܐ ܘܪܕܦ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܒܥܠܕܒ̈ܒܘܗܝ
ܘܢܨܚ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܝܕ ܡܣܝܒܪܢܘܬܗ ܗܠܠܘܝܐ

> This is the holy festival of the commemoration of the blessed martyrs, the excellent Sargis and the chaste Bakos, who in Resafe gained victory; at whose endurance the angels marveled. Satan was defeated and his host put to shame. Halleluya … they nailed the feet of the pious Sargis and made him run with speed before their chariot. And Christ gave relief to his steps and his ankles did not shake from the testings. And he pursued his enemies and overpowered them by his endurance …

These details echo the *Passio* of Mar Sargis which was translated from the original Greek composition in the fifth century into a number of languages including Syriac, Coptic, Armenian and Arabic.[35]

Mar Sargis and Mar Bacchus, like Mart Shir, Mar BarShabba, Mar Cyriacus and Julitta, were believed to be endowed with prophylactic capacities. The protective power released by their bones is explicitly mentioned in n394, a bilingual service book (with instructions to the priest in Sogdian) that has been described as "Responses of the Dawn Prayer and the Midday Prayer from the Common of Saints (recited on Wednesdays)",[36] which states:
n394 side (a) ll.6-8

6 ܠܥܡܢ ܡܪܝ ܣܪܓܝܣ ܘܡܪ]ܝ ܒܟܘܣ[
7 ܚܝܠܐ ܓܒܪܐ ܥܠ ܟܠ ܕܫܪ̈ܝܐ ܒܓܪ̈ܡ[ ]
8 ܢܛܪ ܢܦܫ̈ܬܢ ܒܠܠܝܐ ܘܒܐܝܡܡ[ܐ]

l. 6 to our people. Mar Sargis and Mar [Bacchus]
l. 7 the power prevails over all, which is released by the bones …
l. 8 protects our souls by night and day.

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35 KEY-FOWDEN 1999 8 n.1 for a detailed discussion of the *Passio* of SS. Sergius and Bacchus.

36 HUNTER & DICKENS 2014, 419.

The reference to the bones of Mar Sargis and Mar Bacchus might intimate that their relics were housed at Turfan. Whether or not this was the case, the passage endorses a deep-seated belief in the efficacy of the saints.

CONCLUSION

The Turfan material offers exceptional insight into the commemoration of saints in the liturgy of the Church of the East that was transmitted to its far-flung dioceses.[37] Of singular importance is MIK III/45 (dated between 771-884 CE) and written between 100 to 150 years after the liturgical compilation or arrangement of canons for an annual cycle by Patriarch Išoʿyabh III (649-659 CE). On these grounds, MIK III/45 might be considered not only to be faithful to the original work, but also as the earliest exemplar of the Ḥudrā predating the tenth century Mar ʿIshaia Ḥudrā that was formerly kept in the namesake church in Mosul.[38] The complex recension history of the Ḥudrā is still largely undetermined as the East Syrian liturgy underwent monumental changes during its transmission down the centuries.[39] However, what MIK III/45, as well as the other Turfan fragments clearly show is that the commemoration of various saints in the liturgy transmitted memories, transcending time and place. Key passages indicate a degree of textual continuity and conservatism.

The liturgical commemorations of the saints compensate for the almost a complete absence of Syriac hagiographies from Turfan; only the lives of Mar Bar-Shabba and Mar George have been found. Writing about the recording of the lives saints of Hira in the *Chronicle of Seert* and *The Book of Chastity*, Philip Wood has opined:

> Though the focus of these Lives is the north of Iraq, the sense of the whole is of the interlinked Christian networks, of birth, education, travel and burial, that tied together the former Sasanian Empire from Merv to Hira. And this correspondence between the Sasanian Empire and the holy men is further underlined by their role as missionaries, converting Kurds and Arabs, as well as the Persian origins of many of the monks. To a later compiler … this collection may have preserved a Christianised memory of the Sasanian world as a distinctive territory with its own unity, the his-

37 See BROCK 2004, 3-13.

38 Regrettably, its whereabouts remains uncertain following the dispersal by Da'esh of the ancient Christian communities from Mosul in June 2014. However, a digitized copy was made by the *Hill Museum and Manuscript Library* in Collegeville, Minnesota is available and can be purchased for a modest fee.

39 BADGER 1852, vol. II, p. 22 comments that the last revision of the Ḥuḏrā according to historical notices in the prefaces, was made in 1250 at Deir Alleita.

toric land of the Church of the East and of Abrahamic monasticism".[40]

The remembrance of the Sassanid queen, Mart Shir who, together with Mar BarShabba, was inextricably associated with the advent of Christianity to Marv in the fourth century integrated Turfan within the great missionary expansion eastwards of the Church of the East from the Sassanid capital at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The commemoration of Mar Cyriacus and his mother Julitta, as well as the Roman military saints Mar Sargis and Mar Bacchus embedded the Church of the East within the martyrological and ascetical strata of the early Church, prior to the fifth century Christological controversies.

What the Syriac fragments do show is that the memory and cult of saints was an integral and rich part of Christian life at Turfan. Details embedded within the liturgical commemorations echo the hagiographies (*Passio*) that received international dissemination in Late Antiquity. Whereas the hagiographies were primarily intended as reading for the monks, the chanted commemorations transmitted memories of the saints to the laity. The saints' origins lay in an historical milieu, but they transcended time and place. Their prophylactic capacities are epitomised in the evocation: 'let their prayer be a bulwark to us and keep us from the Evil One'. This oft-repeated refrain, as well as references in n394 and SyrHT 140 to the life-giving capacities of their bones, attests the martyrs' continuing potency. Furthermore, MIK III/45's reference to a 'box' or 'reliquary' in the commemoration of Mart Shir, raises the suggestion that relics of this erstwhile Sassanid queen may have been housed at the monastery. The remains of saints, which were often exhumed from their original burial-spots, could be transported over huge distances.[41] Whilst we do not know what happened to the remains of Mart Shir, perhaps some of her relics were transported from Merv to Turfan to be deposited in the monastery at Bulayïq; thus consolidating its links with the major metropolitanate of the Church of the East in Central Asia.

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[40] WOOD 2014, 19.

[41] Cf. St. Thomas whose remains were carried back to Edessa from India. For discussion of the secondary burial of saints in Late Antiquity, see KÖTTING 1965.

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MORE GRAVESTONES IN SYRIAC SCRIPT FROM TASHKENT, PANJIKENT & ASHGABAT

Mark DICKENS
University of Alberta, Canada

General Introduction

This paper is a follow-up to the one I gave at the 2006 Salzburg Conference on Christianity in China and Central Asia (published in *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters: Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia*), where I discussed four Syriac gravestones on display at the National Historical Museum of Uzbekistan, in Tashkent (hereafter, "the Tashkent Museum").[1] When Alexei Savchenko kindly sent me images of the four stones I discussed at that time (slides I had taken when I visited the museum in 2003 were unfortunately not clear enough to decipher the inscriptions), he also included images of seven other stones (which I had not seen in 2003) kept in storage at the Tashkent Museum, as well as one stored at Tashkent State University (now called the National University of Uzbekistan).[2] In addition to these eight stones, he later sent me images of two other stones – one kept in Panjikent, Tajikistan and the other in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan – which will also be discussed in this paper. I am most grateful for his generous sharing of these images. In addition, I would like to thank Pier Giorgio Borbone for sending me helpful information from his database of gravestones in Syriac script from Central Asia and China and Christopher Atwood for valuable information on names in use during the Mongol Empire.

1 DICKENS 2009. My thanks to all those acknowledged below who provided information and feedback which has helped to improve this paper in its final published form. I am particularly grateful for the very helpful input of Andrew Palmer on various matters related to Syriac grammar and orthography.

2 After subsequently receiving a copy of Минасянц, 2013, I discovered that there are two other gravestones in the Tashkent Museum which I do not have images of: 1) Inv. № 312\5, which is very similar in iconography to Gravestone 9 below with the cross and inscription (seemingly containing only two words) in relief, and 2) Inv. № 312\13, which has a pearl-tipped cross similar to Gravestones 2 and 3 with five lines in Syriac script. Unfortunately, I am unable to read more than a few words in the images of these gravestones contained in the article.

Introduction to the Gravestones

Much has been written about the Christian gravestone corpus from Central Asia and China; for a basic overview, please refer to my aforementioned article in the *Hidden Treasures* volume. Here I will just mention a few salient points about these gravestones which form the bulk of extant Christian inscriptions from Central Asia and China. Christian gravestones in Syriac script have been found in four geographical regions, three of which are currently in China: 1) in and around the city of Quanzhou on the south-east coast;[3] 2) in Inner Mongolia, in the former territory of the Öngüt Turks;[4] and 3) near Almaliq, Xinjiang. The fourth location is the "Seven Rivers" (Turkic *Yeti Su*, Russian *Semirechye*) region of what is now southern Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan, specifically the area around the large lake called Issyk-Kōl, "Hot Lake." With the exception of the first stone (and possibly the ninth stone) described below, the gravestones discussed in this article probably came from the Semirechye/Yeti Su region.[5]

About 610 gravestones were discovered by Russian settlers in Semirechye beginning in 1885; most of these were published by the Semiticist Daniel Chwolson of St. Petersburg in several articles and monographs (1886-1897).[6] In all, Chwolson published 568 stones dated 1200/01-1344/45 CE, most of which were in Syriac (about 30 were Turkic in Syriac script). Shortly after, beginning in 1902, more gravestones were discovered near the medieval city of Almaliq, located in the Ili River Valley, just inside the Chinese side of the current border separating Kazakhstan and China (roughly 500 km ENE from where the Yeti Su stones were discovered); 21 of these (along with two more stones discovered in the vicinity of Issyk-Kōl), dating from 1301/02 to 1371/72, were published by Semiticist Pavel Kokovtsov from St. Petersburg (1906-1909).[7] A large number of stones ended up in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, although many were also distributed to museums throughout the Russian Empire (and later the Soviet Union), not to mention a smaller number that ended up in France, England and Finland. Apparently, about 500 were destroyed in a fire in a museum in Almaty, Kazakhstan in 1939. One of the current challenges is to determine exactly which stones are still extant and where they are currently located, not an easy task.

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3 See LIEU et al, 2012.

4 See HALBERTSMA 2008.

5 I use these two terms interchangeably throughout this paper.

6 CHWOLSON 1886; CHWOLSON, 1890; CHWOLSON 1897. All but three stones from CHWOLSON 1886 were included in CHWOLSON 1890. Similarly, all stones from Chwolson's 1895 publication in Russian (ХВОЛЬСОН 1895) were included in CHWOLSON1897.

7 КОКОВЦОВ 1906; КОКОВЦОВ 1907; КОКОВЦОВ 1909.

Gravestone 1

Image and Description:

Location: Tashkent Museum: Inventory № 312\8.[8]
Dimensions: 24.5 x 19 x 4.5 cm
Publication: Коковцов, 1906, № 9 (196-197)

Text and Translation:

ܚܢܬ ܟܬ(ܫ)ܝ. 1
ܒܬܘܠܬܐ 2
ܫܢܬ ܐܠܦ 3
ܠܝܘܢ (.) ܩܘܦܐ 4

ČT(Š)Y the virgin departed in the year 1620 of the Greeks [1308/09 CE]... monkey

Commentary:

This stone, which originates in Almaliq (as its initial publication by Kokovtsov makes clear), is easily the most attractive of those described in this article, despite the diagonal crack running from the upper left to the lower right. The incised border on this gravestone is not common in the corpus; as Kokovtsov notes, there is a similar (relief) border on another one of the stones he published.[9] The cross rests on a lotus flower, a feature not uncommon in the Semirechye corpus and very common in the Quanzhou corpus.[10] Kokovtsov's comments indicate that this stone was already cracked when he received images of it over 100 years ago: "We were unable to make out the last line of the inscription on the images available to us due to the uncertainty of some letters, as well as

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[8] All inventory numbers and dimensions are taken from Мешкеріс, 2013. I did not have this information available for the stones I discussed in DICKENS 2009. They are: Gravestone No. 1 = Inv. № 312\12, 29.5 x 21.5 x 8 cm; Gravestone No. 2 = Inv. № 312\11, 23 x 16 x 4 cm; Gravestone No. 3 = Inv. № 312\9, 29 x 20 x 9 cm; Gravestone No. 4 = Inv. № 312\10, 28 x 15 x 7.5 cm.

[9] КОКОВЦОВ 1906, № 11; see p. 197 and Таб. XII.

[10] See the excellent discussion by Ken Parry of the iconographic features on the Quanzhou gravestones in LIEU et al. 2012, 243-262.

the presence of large cracks in the stones in this place, which destroyed at least two letters."[11] Minasyants' survey of gravestones in the Tashkent Museum notes that the gravestones (or at least some of them) described in Kokovtsov's 1906 article "were transferred to the Museum of the Turkestan Circle of Lovers of Archeology, and then put in the Tashkent Public Museum,"[12] which explains how this stone later ended up in the Historical Museum in Tashkent.

Like many of the Christian gravestones from Yeti Su, this one uses two systems of dating: the Seleucid era (beginning on 1 October, 312 BCE) and the 12-year animal cycle used by the Chinese, Turks and Mongols. Here 1620 SE corresponds to 1308/09 CE[13] and the Sino-Turkic date is the year of the Monkey. The word at the beginning of l. 4 (ܠܝܘܢ) appears to be an abbreviation for ܠܝܘܢܝܐ, "of the Greeks"[14] – it is also found on another stone from Almaliq, published by Niu Ruji.[15] This word is followed by the crack in the stone, but it is unclear whether any letters were originally written where the crack cuts through this line (it is too short for ܠܬܘܪܟܝܐܝܬ, "in Turkic," as we find in Gravestone 3, l. 3, below). Kokovtsov read the year as ܐܬܪܢܟ (1670 SE = 1358/59 CE),[16] but the number 70 in Syriac is usually indicated by one letter ܥ not two ܢܟ (50 + 20), so this would be unusual, although there are places in the corpus where such "unorthodox" dating formulas are used.[17]

Kokovtsov suggested in his comments on this stone that "in the date, the penultimate letter is not clear in the image and possibly also reads 1650."[18] He further read the last three letters of the last word as ܩܘܠ, but the word is clearly ܩܘܦܐ, "monkey." Thus, neither of Kokovtsov's proposed dates, 1670 or 1650 SE, will work, since the year of the Monkey did not fall in those years. During the early 14th century, the year of the Monkey fell during the following Seleucid era years: 1607/08, 1619/20, 1631/32, 1643/44. The only year from this list that can possibly fit letters visible in the image is SE 1620 (ܐܬܪܟ). We can further narrow the date range to sometime between 1 October, 1308 (beginning of SE 1620) and 30 January, 1309 (end of the year of the Monkey).

Kokovtsov read the name on this stone as ܟ̰ܛܫܐ, *Čatšā*, the first two letters (ܟ̰ܛ) are clear on the image, but the last two letters are less so, as indicated in

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11 Коковцов 1906, 196.

12 Мінасянц, 2013, 622.

13 SE = Seleucid Era, CE = Common Era, BCE = Before Common Era.

14 My thanks to J. F. Coakley for this plausible suggestion, which makes more sense than Kokovtsov's that the word was Turkic ܟܘܢ *kun*, "day" (Коковцов 1906, 196-197).

15 NIU 2008, 60-62: ܝܡܓܪ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܫܢܝ ܘ ܫܒܩ ܒܫܢܬ ܐܬܪܢܕ ܠܝܘܢ, "Yamghur the Priest departed and left this world in the year 1654 [1342/43 CE] of the Greeks."

16 Коковцов, 1906, 196.

17 e.g. CHWOLSON 1890, № 60; CHWOLSON 1897,56.

18 Коковцов 1906, 196.

the tentative reading above. Following the standard practice in Middle Persian (and later Turkic) alphabets based on Aramaic, the Syriac letter ܓ̰ stands for the sound /č/. Although Syriac ܛ is typically used for /t/, it can also represent /d/. Čatšā was included in Baske's *Preliminary Index to Rásonyi's Onomasticon Turcicum*,[19] but this is seemingly based solely on Kokovtsov's reading, since the name is not included in Rásonyi and Baske's final *Onomasticon Turcicum*.[20] The visible letters ܓ̰ܛ(ܫ)ܐ suggest the following options listed in the *Onomasticon Turcicum* (with the Turkic ethnicity and attested date in parentheses): **Čadey** (Kazak, 19th cent.); **Čadïš** (Siberian Tatar, 1598); **Čatay** (Bashkir, 1776, 1777); **Čatï** (Kazak, 19th cent.).[21] Whatever the correct reading is, the name seems to be unique in the gravestone corpus.

Syriac ܒܬܘܠܬܐ, "virgin" is not common in the gravestone corpus, only occurring on this stone and one other recorded by Kokovtsov.[22] As he notes, a young "girl" is usually indicated by Syriac ܛܠܝܬܐ or ܥܠܝܡܬܐ, suggesting that the female in question was past puberty and therefore of marriageable age. However, whether she was a younger woman who was not yet married or an older woman (as Kokovtsov suggests) who was perhaps a consecrated virgin in the church is unclear.[23] The formula beginning with the verb ܫܢܝܬ, "departed" is in contrast to the usual phrasing of "In the year Y, this is the grave of N." Whereas the latter is standard on the Yeti Su stones, the former is more common on the Almaliq stones, as in the other gravestone of a virgin discussed by Kokovtsov: ܟܐܬܘܢ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܫܢܝܬ ܘܫܒܩܬ ܒܫܢܬ ܐܬܪܥܚ, "Khatun the virgin departed and left in the year 1678 [1366/67 CE]."[24]

Gravestone 2

Location: Tashkent Museum: Inventory № 312\7.
Dimensions: 26.5 x 20 x 9 cm
Publication: Хвольсон, 1895, № 4; Chwolson, 1897, № 69 (deciphered by Wilhehn Radloff, image in Таб. II); Малов, 1959, 79-80; Джумагулов, 1971, 97-99

19 BASKI 1986, 36.
20 RÁSONYI & BASKI 2007, 193.
21 RÁSONYI & BASKI 2007, 185, 193.
22 Коковцов 1906, № 2.
23 Коковцов 1906, 192.
24 Коковцов 1906, № 2.

Image and Text:

1 ܐܠܟܣܕܪܘܣ [*sic*]
2 ܩܐܢ ܣܐܩܝܫ ܡܝܢ
3 ܐܠܛܝ ܝܘܙ
4 ܝܓܪܡܝ ܐܘܟ ܐܪܕܝ
5 ܛܘܪܟܟܐ ܝܝܠ
6 ܣܝܟܩܐܢ ܐܪܕܝ
7 ܒܘ ܩܒܪܐ
8 ܡܢܓܘ ܛܐܫ ܛܐܝ ܩܘܒܘܙ
9 ܟܝ ܢܝܓ ܛܘܪܘܪ ܝܐܛ
10 ܒܘܠܣܘܢ

Translation:
aleksandros qan saqïš(ï) miŋ altï yüz yïgïrmï üč ärdï, türkčä yïl sïčqan ärdï. bu qābra mangu-tāš-tāy qobuzčïnïŋ turur, yad bolsun.

(According to) the calculation of Alexander Khan it was one thousand six hundred twenty three [1311/12 CE], it was the Turkic year of the Mouse. This is the grave of Mangu Tāš-tāy the qobuz player. May he be remembered.

Commentary:
The cross on this stone has three "pearls" on each end-piece, a popular design on the gravestones in this corpus. It is the only gravestone in Tashkent written completely in Turkic; thus it exhibits different terminology and different formulae from the others, as discussed below. As with the first stone, the year is given in both dating systems: 1623 in the "calculation of Alexander Khan" (1311/12 CE) and "the Turkic year of the Mouse." Again, we can date it more exactly to sometime between 31 January, 1312 (beginning of the year of the Mouse) and 30 September, 1312 (end of SE 1623). Of particular note is the final phrase *yad bolsun*, "May he be remembered," very common amongst the Christian gravestones in Turkic, whether from Semirechye,[25] Almaliq,[26] Inner Mongolia[27] or Quanzhou and nearby Yangzhou.[28]

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[25] CHWOLSON 1890, № 11,[3]; № 19,[1]; № 21,[1]; № 28; № 34,[2]; № 48,[4]; CHWOLSON 1897, № 46,[1]; № 74; № 243; Коковцов, 1909, № 1; № 2; DŽUMAGULOV 1968, 477-478.

[26] Коковцов 1906, № 11.

[27] NIU 2006, 220-222.

[28] GENG 2006, 248-250; LIEU et al, 2012, B19, B20, B21.

The name on the stone, *Mangu Tāš-tāy*, is Turkic for "like an eternal stone," a good Turkic name but also appropriate for a Christian.[29] Radloff understood ܛܐܝ, *-tāy* as merely part of the proper name, without commenting on it,[30] whereas Jumagulov, noting the fact that Mangu Tāš occurs elsewhere in the corpus without the ending *-tāy*,[31] considered it to be the Turkic suffix *-dāy*, "like" and translated it as "a/the qobuz player like Mangu Tāš."[32] However, this is awkward; why would the deceased not be named himself (as in all other gravestones), rather than being compared to another named musician? Thus, it is more probable that all three elements together comprise the name on the gravestone. Both Mangu, "eternal" and Tāš, "stone" occur frequently in the corpus, often in conjunction with another name.[33]

Gravestone 2 is the only one I know of in the corpus that mentions a musician, although two others refer to the deceased as having voices that resembled musical instruments: Shliḥa, the famous expositor and teacher, whose "voice was lifted up like a trumpet" (ܪܡ ܩܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܫܝܦܘܪܐ)[34] and Čakuš the priest, whose "voice was lifted up like a harp" (ܪܡ ܩܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܟܢܪܐ).[35] In contrast, the deceased commemorated by Gravestone 2 was more than just a "musician," as Radloff translated the Turkic word *qobuzchi*. He was specifically the player of a *qobuz*, a two-stringed fiddle (or more properly, bowed lute) played with a horsehair bow, traditionally popular amongst the more nomadic Kirghiz, Kazakh and Karakalpak peoples of Central Asia and associated with the recitation of oral epics and shamanic rituals.

Interestingly, the *qobuz* is mentioned in another Turkic Christian text, an Uyghur wedding blessing from Turfan written in Syriac script and published by Peter Zieme,[36] where we find the following passage, speaking of the bride and groom: "As extraordinarily good friends and excellent comrades, fitting togeth-

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29 See references to Christ as the cornerstone rejected by the builders in Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; I Pet. 4:2-8.

30 CHWOLSON 1897, 19.

31 e.g. CHWOLSON 1890, № 89.

32 Джумагулов 1971, 98. By contrast, SAUVAGET 1950, 35 and RÁSONYI 1953, 341 both suggest that the *-tāy* element in names represents the Turkic word for "a one- or two-year-old foal" (CLAUSON 1972, 566), but this seems unlikely in this case and that of Gravestone 5 below.

33 The name Mangu is spelled variously in the corpus (ܡܢܓܘ, ܡܢܓܓܘ, ܡܓܘ, ܡܓܓܘ): CHWOLSON 1890, № 17; № 49; № 56,[16]; № 69; № 84; № 89; № 111; № VIII; CHWOLSON 1897, № 22; № 117; № 122; № 146; № 163; № 258; № 280; Klein, 2000, № 17. The name Tāš is invariably spelled ܛܐܫ: CHWOLSON 1890, № 49; № 49,[1]; № V; CHWOLSON 1897, № 22; № 122; № 146; № 163; № 243; № 248; № 263 (the occurrence of ܛܐܣ in CHWOLSON 1890, № VIII maybe a misreading). See also RYBATZKI 2004, 279-280, 283-284.

34 CHWOLSON 1890, № 27.

35 CHWOLSON 1897, № 159.

36 ZIEME 1981.

er like glue and wood, may they constantly help each other. As the qobuz [fiddle] and the gičak [spike fiddle] play together, as the čïnquq [cymbals?] and the čïngïrčaq [handbells?] sound together, may their relatives by marriage work together, and may there be eating, drinking and rejoicing!"

When I spoke on this text at a conference several years ago in the United Kingdom, I was informed by Saida Daukeyeva, at that time an ethnomusicology doctoral student from Kazakhstan, that a *qobuz* and a *gičak* would not normally be played together, which led me to question the wisdom of the author of the wedding blessing.[37] However, when I mentioned this another time that I was speaking about Christian texts from Central Asia, someone commented that this was in fact a perfect description of marriage (and even more so in-law relationships, as the text discusses), if two instruments that were not normally played together had to learn how to harmonize with each other!

There is a strong spiritual dimension to *qobuz* playing, noted frequently in 19th and 20th century accounts of shamanic rituals involving the instrument; "Belief in the magic powers of the *qobyz* as offering protection from evil and misfortune, as a means of maintaining equilibrium in the universe, and as a medium between the human and spiritual worlds permeated the original context of its performance."[38] We have no idea whether the *qobuzchi* mentioned on our gravestone used his talents in a Christian context, whether playing in some sort of capacity in gatherings of the Christian community or keeping busy as a performer at weddings (still the main source of income for Central Asian musicians), but he was obviously well known enough as a musician to be commemorated as such on his gravestone.

Gravestone 3

Location: Formerly in the Tajikistan National Museum, Dushanbe, Tajikistan: Item BP-201/5. Now in the Museum of Ancient Panjikent (Panjikent, Tajikistan), where it was brought for safe-keeping as a result of the Dushanbe Museum being ransacked for valuables during the Tajikistan Civil War (1992-97).[39]
Dimensions: 29 x 23 cm (thickness measurement not available)
Publication: Chwolson, 1897, № 77

37 For an excellent introductory article on the *qobuz*, see DAUKEYEVA 2012, available at https://soas.academia.edu/SaidaDaukeyeva.
38 DAUKEYEVA 2012, 189.
39 Alexei Savchenko, personal correspondence, June 6, 2013.

Image and Text:

1 ܒܫܢܬ ܐܠܦܐܘܫܬܡܐ[40]
2 ܥܣܪܝܢ ܫܬܐ ܗܘܐ
3 ܫܢܬ ܐܪܢܒܐ ܒܠܫܢ ܛܘܪܟܝܐ
4 ܛܒܫܓܢ ܗܢܘ ܩܒܪܐ[41]
5 ܕܢܚܐ ܪܫ ܥܕܬܐ
6 ܒܪܗ ܕܡܪܩܘܣ ܩܫܝܫܐ

Translation:
In the year one thousand six hundred twenty six [1314/15 CE]. It was the year of the Hare, in Turkic "tavishgan." This is the grave of Denha, the head of the church, the son of Marqos the priest.

Commentary:
Like Gravestone 2, the cross on Gravestone 3 has three "pearls" on each end-piece. There are at least three spelling errors in the date formula. The initial word, missing the *nun* (ܢ), should be corrected to ܒܫܢܬ, "in the year"; ܒܠܫܢ ܛܘܪܟܝܐ should be corrected to ܒܠܫܢ ܛܘܪܟܝܐ "in Turkic" and ܛܒܫܓܢ is usually spelled ܛܒܫܩܐܢ, Turkic for "hare," on the gravestones. Also of note is the use of the masculine form of Syriac numbers, where the feminine form would be correct, here (ܫܬܐ, "six") and on Gravestones 4 (ܚܕ, "one") and 6 (ܬܫܥܐ, "nine"); this error is explained by the fact that Turkic languages do not have grammatical gender.[42] The date 1626 SE corresponds to 1314/15 CE. "The year of the Hare" is given in both Syriac (ܐܪܢܒܐ) and Turkic (ܛܒܫܓܢ), as on a number of the gravestones in this corpus. As before, we can narrow down the date to sometime

[40] See the discussion under Gravestone 4 below regarding the typical misspelling of the word "hundred" as ܡܐ, rather than the correct ܡܐܐ.
[41] Here and on Gravestones 4-8, the phrase ܗܢܘ ܩܒܪܐ, "this is the grave of" does not follow standard Syriac grammar, since the name that follows is not preceded by the particle ܕ in order to correctly indicate possession. For a more general description of ways in which these inscriptions depart from expected Syriac orthography, see KLEIN 2002.
[42] The numbers must agree with the feminine noun ܫܢܬܐ, "year." Regarding errors on the gravestones related to grammatical gender, see KLEIN 2002.

between 31 January, 1315 (beginning of the year of the Hare) and 30 September, 1315 (end of SE 1626).

The Syriac name ܕܢܚܐ, ***Denḥa*** ("manifestation, Epiphany") is very common in the corpus, while ܡܪܩܘܣ, *Marqos* is somewhat less so.[43] *Whereas his father Marqos was a priest, **Denḥa** is described as ܪܫܥܕܬܐ, "the head of the church," a term that is found on another inscription in the Semirechye corpus (where it designates both the deceased and his father as ܪܫܥܕܬܐ),[44] as well as Syriac memorial inscriptions dating from the 8th-12th centuries in the ruins of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Mar Addai in the village of Heşterek in the Tur 'Abdin region (modern-day Mardin province, Turkey).[45] Andrew Palmer has interpreted this word as equivalent to the English term "rector," representing here "the senior member of a college of three or four priests."[46] Perhaps this position in the Central Asian Christian community can be contrasted with that of* ܪܫܚܘܒܐ, "the head of charity," found on another gravestone in the Tashkent Museum,[47] indicating a division of labour between clerics responsible for leadership of local congregations and those who administered alms to the poor and needy.

Gravestone 4

<u>Location</u>: Tashkent Museum: Inventory № 312\3.
<u>Dimensions</u>: 30 x 21.5 x 10 cm
<u>Publication</u>: Klein, 2000, № 41 (Pl. 71)

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43 Denḥa: CHWOLSON 1890, № 3; № 75,[2]; CHWOLSON 1897, № 15; № 45; № 61; № 74; № 123, № 160; № 283; № 290; № 305; № 308; KLEIN 2000, № 12; Marqos: CHWOLSON 1897, № 221; № 236; № 318.

44 Джумагулов, 1987, 44-45: ܫܢܬ ܐܬܪܒ ܗܘܐ ܐܪܢܒܐ ܗܘ ܩܒܪܗ ܕܓܝܘܪܓܝܣ ܪܫܥܕܬܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܢܛܘܢ ܪܫܥܕܬܐ, "In the year 1602, it was (the year of) the Hare. This is the grave of Giwargis (George), the head of the church, son of Anton, the head of the church."

45 POGNON 1907, 192-197 (№ 96, l. 3; № 97, ll. 2, 8; № 99, ll. 2, 7; № 100, l. 3; № 101, l. 3, 5; № 102, l. 2; № 103, l. 4; № 106, l. 5; № 107, l. 6). These inscriptions are dated 1083 SE (771/72 CE) 1414 SE (1102/03 CE), 1287 SE (975/76 CE), 1477 SE (1165/66 CE), 1308 SE (996/97 CE), 1353 SE (1041/42 CE), 1307 SE (995/96 CE), 1385 SE (1073/74 CE) and 1224 SE (912/13 CE). See also PALMER 1987, 64.

46 PALMER 1990, 220-221. My thanks to Andrew Palmer for alerting me to the existence of these inscriptions (personal correspondence, June 2, 2014).

47 DICKENS 2009, 38-40.

Image and Text:

1 ܒܫܢܬ ܐܠܦ ܫܬܡܐܐ (ܐ)
2 ܘܬܠܬܝܢ ܚܕ ܗܘܐ ܫܢܬ
3 ܩܘܒܐ ܗܢܐ
4 ܩܒܪܗ
5 ܐܪܣܠܢ
6 ܡܗܝܡܢܐ

Translation:
In the year one thousand six hundred and thirty one [1319/20 CE]. It was the year of the Monkey. This is the grave of Arslan the believer.

Commentary:
In his survey of the gravestones currently in the Tashkent Museum, Minasyants notes that two gravestones with Syriac inscriptions were uncovered at the beginning of the 20th century in Tashkent, in the courtyard of Colonel S. D. Asfendiarova on Starogospitalnoy Street. Since these would not have been included in the publications of either Chvolson or Kokovtsov, one of them may be this stone (although there are four other candidates: Gravestones 8-10 below and Gravestone No. 3 from my earlier publication[illegible]). The upper and two side arms of the cross have "Maltese" cross ends, while the lower arm has the three "pearls" seen on many of the crosses in the corpus.

The date 1631 SE corresponds to 1319/20 CE. Combining this with the reference to the year of the Monkey allows us to place the date of death sometime between 31 January, 1320 (beginning of the year of the Monkey) and 30 September, 1320 (end of 1681 SE). Klein reads the number 600 as the correctly spelled ܫܬܡܐܐ, but it might also be the orthographic variant ܫܬܡܐ frequently found on these stones (e.g. Gravestones 3 and 5); for yet another variant spelling, see Gravestone 6 below. The name, ܐܪܣܠܢ, *Arslan* (Turkic for "li-

[illegible] DICKENS 2009, 36-38.

on") is an exceedingly popular name in the gravestone corpus.[49] On this stone, the standard description of non-cleric males is used: ܡܗܝܡܢܐ, 'believer' (see also gravestones 5 and 6 below).

Gravestone 5

Location: Tashkent Museum Inventory № 3124.
Dimensions: 27.5 x 22.5 x 7 cm
Publication: Хвольсон, 1895, № 9; Chwolson, 1897, № 105 (image in Tab. II)

Image and Text:

1 ܒܫܢܬ ܐܠܦ ܘ
2 ܫܬܡܐܐ
3 ܘܬܠܬܝܢ*
4 ܘܬܡܢܝܐ '' ܠ(ܐ)ܠ
5 ܒܪܣ ܗܘܐ*
6 ܗܢܐ ܩܒܪܗ
7 ܕܐܘܪܘܓ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ
8 ܘܒܪܬܗ [lege ܘܒܪܬܗ]
9 ܬܘܙܬܝ
10 ܪܚܡܬܢܝܬܐ

* ll. 3, 5 are inscribed upside down on the lower part of the stone

Translation:
In the year one thousand six hundred, 1638 [1326/27 CE], it was the Turkic year of the Tiger.[51] This is the grave of Urug the believer and his daughter Tuztäy the compassionate.

Commentary:
As Chwolson noted in his original reading of this stone, the order of the lines is not immediately clear, due to two lines being written upside down on the lower part of the stone. Thus, l. 1 is above the very simple cross; l. 2 is to the far left

[49] CHWOLSON 1890, № 8; № 9; № 11,[?]; № 34; №36; 42,[1]; №48,[?]; № 75; CHWOLSON 1897, № 22; № 45; № 58; № 87; № 93; № 107; № 132; № 166; № 202; KLEIN 2000, № 14. Arslan is often compounded with other names. See also KLEIN & TABALDIEV 2009, 88; RYBATZKI 2004, 275.
[50] Or possibly ܬܘܠܝܐ.
[51] Underlined text is in Turkic.

of the cross (above l. 4); l. 3 is the fifth line below the cross (upside-down); l. 4 is immediately to the left of the cross (below l. 2); l. 5 is the fourth line below the cross (upside-down); l. 6 is immediately to the right of the cross (above l. 7); l. 7 is on the far left of the cross (below l. 6); l. 8 is the first line below the cross; l. 9 is the second line below the cross; and l. 10 is the third line below the cross.

The inscription begins with the words *one thousand six hundred* spelled out (note the non-standard "phonetic" spelling of the word ܐܠܦ). For some reason, the scribe then switched to the system of using letters to represent numbers;[52] 1638 SE corresponds to 1326/27 CE. Unlike Gravestones 3 and 6, which give the Turkic animal-name using Syriac phrases – ܛܘܪܟܐܝܬ ܛܒܫܓܐܢ, "in Turkic *tavišghan*" or ܗܢܐ ܛܘܪܟܐܝܬ ܒܐܪܣ "this is *bars* in Turkic" – Gravestone 5 uses a Turkic phrase ܛܘܪܟܟܐ (ܐ)ܝܠ ܒܪܣ *turkča yil bars*, ending in the Syriac past tense copula ܗܘܐ, yielding "it was the Turkic year of the Tiger." Chwolson's reading of (ܐ)ܝܠ, "year" differs from the usual way of spelling this common Turkic word in Syriac script (cf. ܝܝܠ on Gravestone 2), but it is hard to tell from the image if indeed there is an initial *aleph*. As Chwolson notes, the dual dating system of 1638 SE and the "year of the Tiger" allows us to narrow the date down to between 1 October, 1326 (beginning of 1638 SE) and 30 January 1327 (end of the year of the Tiger).

This gravestone seems to commemorate a father and his daughter; the name of the former, ܐܘܪܘܓ, *Urug*, is Turkic for "seed" (and by extension "progeny"). Chwolson rightly notes that the word ܒܬܪܗ, "after him" is an error, correcting it to ܒܪܬܗ, "his daughter"; this word is preceded by the letter ܘ, "and," although the loop seems to double as part of the final ܗ on l. 6.[53] Chwolson was unsure whether to read the second name on l. 9 as ܛܘܪܬܐ or ܛܘܙܬܐ; I would suggest ܛܘܙܬܝ, *Tuz-tāy*, Turkic for "like salt." The ending *-tāy*, "like" is commonly used in Turkic names (as seen in Gravestone 2 above) and "like salt" would be an appropriate name for a Christian, calling to mind the phrase from the Sermon on the Mount, "You are the salt of the earth."[54]

Curiously, although not common in the gravestone corpus, Urug seems to be a name used by both males and females.[55] Thus, this stone uses ܡܗܝܡܢܐ, the male term for "believer," but the female equivalent ܡܗܝܡܢܬܐ is used on the only

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52 See also CHWOLSON 1897, № 36, № 48.

53 Chwolson suggests that these lines should be translated as "the believers Urug and his daughter Tuzta" but the word ܡܗܝܡܢܐ, "believer" is lacking the plural *seyame* marker.

54 Matt. 5:13.

55 RÁSONYI & BASKI, 2007, 821-822 does not add any information on gender of the name, beyond the gravestone data discussed here. My thanks for this information to Peter Zieme, who suggests that the name should indeed be male (personal correspondence, June 9, 2014).

other example in Chwolson's works.[56] The third example from the corpus, found in Kokovtsov's works, is probably male, as the double name ܬܘܙ ܬܡܘܪ suggests; ܬܡܘܪ *Temür*, "iron" is typically a masculine name.[57] Tuz is slightly more common than Uruz in the corpus.[58] Chwolson considered the final line as incomprehensible, but I propose to read it as a modifier, describing Tuz-tāyas [illegible], which I understand to be a transliteration of Persian رحمدل, *rahm-dil*,[59] "compassionate" (still used as an adjective in various modern languages, including Urdu and Uzbek, particularly in translating the attribute of God found in the phrase الرحيم, *ar-rahīm*, "the Merciful" from the Muslim *Bismillah* formula). This would not be unusual for the gravestone corpus, which has other Persian loan-words in it, a reflection of the inroads that Persian had made in Central Asia in the previous centuries.[60]

Gravestone 6

Location: Tashkent State University, Faculty of History, Department of Archaeology.
Dimensions: 26 cm x 20 cm (thickness measurement not available)
Publication: Klein, 2000, № 11 (Pl. 41)

Text and Translation:

1 [illegible]
2 [illegible]
3 [illegible]
4 [illegible]

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[56] CHWOLSON 1890, № 50: [illegible] ܬܘܙ. An image of the stone can be found in Джумагулов, 1987, 119.
[57] Коковцов, 1906, № 10: there are no other words on this stone other than ܬܘܙ ܬܡܘܪ.
[58] CHWOLSON 1890, № 80,1; CHWOLSON 1897, № 86; № 94; № 177; № 230. The gender of this name is indicated by its typical combination with female names and/or titles like [illegible] and [illegible]. However, the gender of some instances of the name is unclear, due to its combination with typically male names like [illegible].
[59] In this compound word, the first element رحم is of course Arabic.
[60] A good example can be found on one of the gravestones published in Dickens, 2009, 28-32: [illegible] (*ispah-salar*), representing Persian سپهسالار, "military leader" or "commander-in-chief."

ܗܘ ܩܒܪܗ ܗܢܕܘ 5
ܡܗܝܡܢܐ 6

In the year one thousand six hundred forty-nine [1337/38 CE]. It was the year of the Tiger; this is "bars" in Turkic. This is the grave of Hindu the believer.

<u>Commentary</u>:
As Minasyants notes, this gravestone was originally found in 1919 at the village of Bir-bulak (roughly 30 km south of Bishkek), which explains why it was not published by either Chwolson or Kokovtsov.[61] The ends of all four arms of the cross are Maltese-style. Klein reads the last number in the date as ܫܬ "six" but it is clearly ܬܫܥܐ, "nine"; 1649 SE corresponds to 1337/38 CE. Factoring in the reference to the year of the Tiger gives a date between 31 January, 1338 (the beginning of the year of the Tiger) and 30 September, 1338 (the end of 1649 SE). Again, the animal-cycle year is given in both Syriac and Turkic.[62]

The name ܗܢܕܘ, *Hindu* deserves special comment. It is found (along with the more common spelling ܗܢܕܘ) on several gravestones from Yeti Su[63] and occurs in Chinese on a gravestone from Yangzhou of "Elizabeth the wife of Xindu from Dadu (Peking)."[64] Syriac ܗܢܕܘ, from Sanskrit सिन्धु, refers to the Indus River and, by extension, the country of India.[65] It is not a common name in Syriac; apart from the gravestone corpus, most of its few occurrences seem to date from after the withdrawal of the Church of the East into northern Mesopotamia in the wake of Timur's invasion of Iraq in the late 14th century. Thus, two deacons of the Church of the East named "Hendi" or "Hindi" are recorded ca. 1572 and ca. 1787.[66] More significantly, two patriarchs of the short-lived Diyarbakir Line (or Amid Patriarchate) of the Uniate Chaldean Church were named Lazar Hindi (Joseph IV, 1757-96) and Augustine Hindi (Joseph V, 1802-27).[67] Indeed, the family name Hindi is still found in the Middle East, especially amongst Muslims, usually indicating ancestors who either came from India or were involved in trade there. As a personal name in Arabic, Hind (هند) is female, but the Syriac name seems to be always used for males. The name apparently has a long history in the Middle East, occurring on "seven incantation bowls [which] all name the same male client, one Mahperoz son of Hindo," (*mpyrwz br*

[61] Минасянц, 2013, 622, citing Массон, 1978, 53.
[62] Note the variation in spelling Turkic *bars*, "tiger" between ܒܪܣ on Gravestone 3 and ܒܐܪܣ on this stone.
[63] CHWOLSON 1890, № 50,9; № II; CHWOLSON 1897, № 114; № 120; № 145; № 146; № 192.
[64] GENG 2006, 255; LIEU et al, 2012, 171-174.
[65] PAYNE SMITH 1879-1901, Vol. I, col. 1026.
[66] WILMSHURST 2000, 70, 159.
[67] WILMSHURST 2011, 332-333.

hyndw); the Persian name Mahperoz suggests a date during the Sassanid era (224-651).[68]

The Central Asian occurrences of this name are not restricted to the gravestone corpus however; a bilingual Sino-Mongolian inscription dating from 1362, during the reign of the last Yuan emperor, Toghan-Temür (1333-1370), is dedicated to "His Excellency Hsin-tu (Hindu)" (忻都). In recognition of his son Oron's service to the Mongols, Hindu was posthumously granted the title of "prince." It is clear from both the Chinese and Mongolian text that Hindu's family were not Mongols, but rather ethnic Uighurs who served in the Mongol administration after having previously served the *Ïduq Qut*, the ruler of the Uighur Kingdom of Qocho, based in Turfan, one of the locations where we have abundant evidence of a strong Christian presence.[69] Geng also suggests that the Hindu mentioned in the Yangzhou stone could possibly be identified with Xindu (Pinyin equivalent to Wade-Giles Hsin-tu) the son of Dashiman (d. 1317), a Qarluq Turk who served as a high official under four successive Mongol emperors, beginning with Kublai Khan (1260-1294). Dashiman's son Xindu served as general commandant of Shangdu under the emperor Ayurparibhadra (1311-1320).[70] The Qarluqs were almost certainly the Turks who converted to Christianity in the late 8th century and received a metropolitan bishop from Patriarch Timothy I (780-823),[71] so it is not unreasonable to conjecture that Dashiman and his son Xindu/Hindu were Turkic Christians.[72]

How can we connect all this onomastic data? *Contra* Mingana, who suggested that ܣܐܙܝܟ ܗܢܕܘ found on two gravestones[73] was a reference to "Sāzīk the Indian" and evidence of "constant intercourse between the different Christian peoples of Central Asia and the Far East,"[74] it seems likely that the name ܗܢܕܘ originated at the latest in Sassanian times as an indication of some form of connection with India, presumably through trade and commerce. The name was probably brought by the Persian-speaking Church of the East to Central Asia at some point. Whether or not the few who bear that name in the gravestone corpus had connections themselves with India is impossible to determine, but they were clearly not of Indian ethnicity (if they were, the ethnonym ܗܢܕܘܝܐ or

68 HUNTER 2002, 259, 261, 271, 273. I am grateful to the following members of the Hugoye discussion group for information I have incorporated into this discussion: Thomas Carlson, Sergey Minov and Salam Rassi (personal correspondence, August 19-21, Sept. 3, 2013).

69 CLEAVES 1949, 16-20, 24-27, 30-38, 83-94.

70 GENG 2006, 253-254.

71 See DICKENS 2010.

72 This Dashiman appears to be different from the Christian Dašman mentioned in Endicott-West, 1989, 135-138, who is described as a Kereyid (Kerait) Mongol who died in 1304.

73 CHWOLSON 1897, № 145 & 146.

74 MINGANA 1925, 335. In contrast to Mingana's assertions that the gravestones give evidence of a multi-ethnic cosmopolitanism, it is clear from the names on the stones that the vast majority of the Christian community were Turkic.

ܐܬܝܘܢ would have been used.)[75] Presumably the name spread to the Uighur Christians, resulting in its occurrence amongst a number of Uighur elites during the Mongol Yuan dynasty.

Gravestone 7

Location: Ashgabat National Museum of History, Archaeology Department: Item N-310. Whereas there were originally two gravestones in the Ashgabat Museum, one of them vanished during the regime of former Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov (1991-2006). Thanks for the survival of Gravestone 7 are due to Nurgozel Beshimova, Head of the Archaeology Department of the Ashgabat Museum. The image reproduced in this article was taken by Vladimir Artemyev.[76]

Dimensions: 27.5 x 18.5 x 0.6 cm
Publication: Chwolson, 1897, № 262; Массон, 1978

Text and Translation:

1 ܗܢܘ ܩܒܪܗ
2 ܐܬܝܘܢ ܛܠܝܐ

This is the grave of Athion, the young boy.

Commentary:

This stone and the other stone from Ashgabat, now missing, were discussed by M. A. Masson in his 1978 article. The missing stone, deciphered by the Soviet scholar A.V. Paykova, had the inscription "А л к а П е р н о в е в т ."[77] The drawing of this lost stone in Masson's article indicates that the inscription was probably

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[75] Examples of genuine ethnonyms in the corpus include 1) ܝܘܚܢܢ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܛܘܓܓܝܐ 'Yuhannan the Tawgach priest" (Chwolson, 1890, № 3,¹); where Tawgach could mean "Chinese," "Uighur" or "Turk" (Clauson, 1972, 438); 2) ܛܪܝܢ ܨܝܢܝܬܐ 'Terin the Chinese (woman)" (CHWOLSON 1897, № 24); 3) ܒܢܘܣ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܐܘܝܓܘܪ 'Banus the Uighur priest" (Chwolson, 1897, № 97); 4) ܝܘܚܢܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܐܪܡܢܝܐ "Yuhannan the Armenian bishop" (CHWOLSON 1897, № 100); and 5) ܛܛܐ (ܛܛܪ?) ܡܘܓܠܝܐ 'Tata (Tatar?) the Mongol" (CHWOLSON 1897, № 268). However, most such "gentilic" forms in the corpus indicate residents of two other cities in Central Asia: Almaliq (ܐܠܡܠܝܩܝܐ or ܐܠܡܠܝܓܝܐ in CHWOLSON 1890, № 98; № 99; № 3,¹; № 3,²; № 11,¹; № 11,²; CHWOLSON 1897, № 261) and Kashghar (ܟܫܓܪܝܐ in CHWOLSON 1897, № 211).

[76] Alexei Savchenko, personal correspondence, June 6, 2013.

[77] Мокрасова, 2013, 620, citing Массон, 1978, 55.

ܐܠܩܐ ܣܥܘܪܐ, although the second word is poorly formed (this stone was not included in any of Chwolson's works).[78] Thus А л к а renders the name ܐܠܩܐ,[79] which may represent the imperative form of the Turkic verb *alka-* "to praise."[80] The ecclesiastical title, rather than ܦܪܝܕܘܛܐ, from Greek *periodeutes* (referring to "a visiting priest acting as the bishop's representative in visiting villages and monasteries"[81]) is ܣܥܘܪܐ, "visitor," which at certain times and places in the Syriac tradition has been conflated with ܦܪܝܕܘܛܐ and/or ܟܘܪܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ, from Greek *chorepiscopos* (referring to "one who ruled over village churches in the place of a bishop"[82]), while at other times the three terms have referred to quite separate offices. All three terms are used on the Semirechye gravestones, but it is unclear what, if any, overlap there may have been between them.[83]

The iconography of Gravestone 7 is similar to that of Gravestone 4; the upper and two side arms of the cross have "Maltese" cross ends, but the lower arm has the three "pearls." The name ܦܬܝܘܢ, *Pethion* recalls a 5th cent. Persian hermit martyred under Yazdegerd II.[84] I am not aware of any other occurrences of this name in the gravestone corpus. There is nothing to identify this young boy any further; since ܛܠܝܐ (which has a broad definition ranging from "an infant, very young child" to "a lad, servant"[85]) is contrasted in the corpus with ܥܠܝܡܐ, "a young man over eighteen years of age,"[86] we can assume that Pethion was probably less than eighteen years old. We might wonder if he died in 1649 or 1650 SE (1337/38 or 1338/39 CE), when the plague swept through the area, resulting in many gravestones from that year, as discussed below.

Gravestone 8
Location: Tashkent Museum: Inventory № 312\2.
Dimensions: 43 x 33 x 9.5 cm

[78] For more on these two stones from Ashgabat, see Klein, 2000, 225-226. Abb. 75 on p. 429 of this volume reproduces the drawing found in Массон, 1978, 52.
[79] Cf. CHWOLSON 1897, № 316.
[80] CLAUSON 1972, 138. It is not uncommon for Syriac ܩ to represent /k/ in Turkic words.
[81] PAYNE SMITH 1903, 460.
[82] PAYNE SMITH 1903, 210.
[83] On which, see Chwolson, 1890, 125, who notes four *chorepiscopi*, one *periodeutes* and eight visitors (not including the 1897 volume, of course). See also my brief discussion of these terms in DICKENS 2009, 38.
[84] PAYNE SMITH, 1879-1901, Vol. II, col. 3340.
[85] PAYNE SMITH, 1903, 174.
[86] PAYNE SMITH, 1903, 60.

Image and Text:

1 ܗܢܐ ܩܒܪܗ
2 ܐܒܪܗܡ
3 ܒܪܗ ܐܝܣܚܩ

Translation:
This is the grave of Abraham the son of Isaac.

Commentary:
Apparently, this stone has not previously been published; therefore it is possibly one of the two stones uncovered in Tashkent at the beginning of the 20th century noted above. Like Gravestones 4 and 7, the upper and two side arms of the cross have "Maltese" cross ends; however, the lower arm is concave, not convex. Both *Abraham* and *Isaac* are popular Syriac names (in contrast to the biblical order of the patriarchs, note that Isaac is the father here!); the former is more popular than the latter in the corpus.[87] Abraham is also the name of the deceased commemorated on a gravestone from Olon Süme, Inner Mongolia, inscribed in three scripts: Syriac, Uighur and Chinese.[88]

87 Abraham: CHWOLSON 1897, № 21; № 34; № 83; № 92; № 185; № 306. Isaac: Chwolson, 1897, № 298. See also RYBATZKI 2004, 274.
88 NIU 2006, 217-220; Niu, 2008, 67-72.

Gravestone 9

Image and Description:

Location: Tashkent Museum: Inventory № 312\6.
Dimensions: 30.5 x 16 x 12.5 cm

Text:

1 ܝܫܘܥ (?)
2 ܐܘܝ (?)

Translation:
Jesus (?) alas (?)

Commentary:

Since this stone has not been published before, it is also possibly one of the two stones uncovered in Tashkent at the beginning of the 20th century. The simple cross on a base is in relief, as is the minimal text. The stone is undated and the name is hard to read, so there is little to say about its content; the word on line 2 is speculative, but the Syriac word ܐܘܝ, "alas" would not be out of place on a gravestone. Not surprisingly, the name *Jesus* is quite common in this corpus.[39] In contrast to the majority of incised gravestones in the corpus, far fewer are carved in relief like this one and these are normally of higher quality. It is unusual for a relief stone to have so little text, suggesting that this stone may have been begun but not properly finished. This raises the question of its provenance, since other examples of relief gravestones in the corpus are typically from Almaliq[40] and, as noted above, some of the stones from that location described in Kokovtsov's 1906 article found their way to Tashkent. Finally, given the rudimentary nature of the stone-carving and the possibility that the name was unfinished, perhaps as a result of ruining the stone (relief carving is less forgiving than incised carving when mistakes are made), other possible interpretations of the intended name include [illegible],[41] ܝܘܚܢܢ (John), [illegible][42] or ܝܥܩܘܒ (Jacob), all found in the corpus.

[39] CHWOLSON 1890, № 16,1; № 18,1; № 19; № 38,2; № XXXVIII; CHWOLSON 1897, № 9; № 30; № 230; № 269; Klein, 2000, № 1. See also RYBATZKI 2004.277-278.

[40] See for example Коковцов 1906, № 11 (Таб. XII); Коковцов 1907, № 1 (Таб. I), № 2 (Таб. II).

[41] CHWOLSON 1897, № 49.

Gravestone 10

Location: Tashkent Museum: Inventory № 31211.
Dimensions: 34 x 25 x 5.7 cm
Commentary:
Since this gravestone lacks an inscription, it has thus far not been published to my knowledge; therefore it too is possibly one of the two stones uncovered in Tashkent at the beginning of the 20th century. The "cross potent" has T-shaped arms at the ends.

Concluding Observations

These ten gravestones constitute a typical representation of the corpus from Semirechye and thus exemplify the sort of demographic and cultural information that can be gleaned from the corpus. Of the ten, one lacks an inscription, eight of the deceased are male and one is female (Gravestone 1). Of the nine with inscriptions, one is entirely in Turkic (Gravestone 2), while the rest are in Syriac. In addition to names, several of the gravestones include titles of interest; the deceased include a virgin (probably indicating her formal status as a dedicated virgin in the church), a musician (whether or not he played in an ecclesiastical context is unclear), a "head of the church" (himself the son of a priest), three "believers" (indicating adults without ecclesiastical positions) and a young boy. The stones also reflect the typical mixture of names found in the corpus, stemming from both the Syriac tradition (Denḥā, Marqos, Ḥindu, Pethion, Abraham, Isaac and Jesus) and the surrounding Turkic culture (ČT(S)Y, Mangu Taš-tāy, Arslan, Urug and Tuz-tāy).

Also of interest are the three different formulae used in the inscriptions. The vast majority of stones in the Yeti Su corpus use a variation of the following Syriac formula: *In the year [Seleucid era date]. It was the year of the [name of animal year in Syriac (from 12-year animal cycle)], in Turkic [name of animal year in Turkic]. This is the grave of [personal name and ecclesiastical title or designation as a believer, youth or child]*. By contrast, inscriptions that are entirely in Turkic follow a slightly different template: *(According to) the calculation of Alexander [followed by optional title] it was [Seleucid era date], it was the Turkic year [name of animal year]. This is the grave of [personal name and possible title]. May he/she be remembered*. A third variant in wording is also evident in some of the stones from Almaliq (including Gravestone 2 above)

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[92] CHWOLSON 1890, № 8; № 16; № 49,10; № 50,10; № 50,11; № 75,1; № XII; CHWOLSON 1897, № 61; № 62; № 138; № 196; № 222; № 266; № 267; № 284. Peter Zieme has argued convincingly in a paper given at the Toyo Bunko (March 2, 2013) that this name comes from Sogdian *ʾyw-šmd*, "Sunday," an equivalent of the Syriac name [illegible], "Sunday."

which sometimes begin with the following formula or an abbreviation of it: ܫܢܝ ܘܫܒܩ [ܫܢܝܬ ܘܫܒܩܬ] ܠܗ ܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ, *[Name] departed and left this world…*[93] This wording is also used on the aforementioned *memorial inscriptions in the Syrian Orthodox Church of Mar Addai in Heşterek.*[94]

Gravestones 1-6 contain dates according to both the Seleucid era and the 12-year animal cycle. Seleucid dates are given spelled out in full (Gravestones 2, 3, 4, 6), using the alphabetical equivalents of numbers (Gravestone 1) or a combination of the two (Gravestone 5), while years in the animal-cycle use only the Syriac word (Gravestones 1, 4), only the Turkic word (Gravestones 2, 5) or the two together (Gravestones 3, 6). Like some other stones in the corpus,[95] Gravestone 5 inserts the Turkic phrase ܛܘܪܟܝܐ (ܐ) ܝܠ ܦܪܣ, "the Turkic year of the Tiger" into an otherwise Syriac commemorative text.

The six gravestones with dates encompass a 30 year period between autumn 1308 and summer 1338. During this time, the Mongol Chaghatay *Ulus* where these Turkic Christians lived (whether in Yeti Su or Almaliq) was ruled by eight khans, most of whom had short reigns: Nalighu (1308-1309), Esen-Buqa (1309-1318?), Kebeg (1318?-1327), Eljigidei (1327-1330), Töre Temür (1330-1331), Tarmashirin (1331-1334), Buzan (1334-1335) and Changshi (1335-1338).[96] It was a very significant period for the Turkic Christians, during which Pope Benedict XII corresponded with Khan Changshi,[97] but more importantly the Islamization that had restarted with the conversion of Tarmashirin to Islam began to pick up pace. The years 1649-50 SE (1337/38 and 1338/39 CE) were also marked by the ravages of plague in Central Asia (the same Black Death which devastated Europe beginning in 1346), acknowledged in many of the gravestones in the corpus.[98] Around the same time, probably in 1339, a Catholic bishop and six other friars who had established a Franciscan mission in Almaliq, the Chaghatay capital, were martyred, as recorded by John Marignolli.[99] Shortly after this period, in 1347, the Chaghatay *Ulus* disintegrated into several smaller polities (Qara'una, Moghulistan and Mawarannahr), a situation which facilitated the rise to power of Timur (1336-1405). Thus, in many ways, these gravestones represent the swan-song of Syriac Christianity in Central Asia.

93 Коковцов 1906, № 2, 8; Коковцов, 1907, № 1, 2.

94 POGNON 1907, 191-197 (№ 95, l. 1); (№ 97, ll. 4-5); (№ 98, l. 2); (№ 100, l. 2); (№ 106, l. 2); (№ 107, l. 4), etc.

95 CHWOLSON 1890, № 97; № 11,[3]; № 49,[6]; CHWOLSON, 1897, № 105, 106, 113, 214, 240.

96 ATWOOD 2004, 626.

97 MOULE 1917, 15, 18.

98 CHWOLSON 1890, 81-91; CHWOLSON 1897, 31-38.

99 MOULE 1917, 4-5. The original Latin text can be found in VAN DEN WYNGAERT 1929, 510-511.

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THE TALE OF AHIKAR ACCORDING TO A GARSHUNI TURKISH MANUSCRIPT OF THE JOHN RYLANDS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Peter ZIEME

Introduction[1]

The maxims of Ahikar has since long been considered as one of the eminent pieces of Near Eastern wisdom literature. They are embedded in the following frame story. The wise Ahikar, who was King Sanherib's minister, had no children. The gods advised him to adopt Nadan, his sister's son. He educated Nadan and gave him finally wise admonitions. These usually short phrases are the kernel of the story and are good specimens of the wisdom literature.[2] Despite his good education, Nadan committed bad acts. When the uncle was criticising him, the nephew tried to kill him. By an intrigue, the uncle was sentenced to death. Together with his wife Ahikar succeeded to persuade the executioner not to kill him but to hide him in a cavern. The king of Egypt sent a message to the king of Assur that the latter should send him someone who can build a castle between earth and heaven. The executioner informs his king that Ahikar was still alive, and then the king sent him to Egypt. In the following the king of Egypt and the foreigner arranged new and new contests, at the end the king wanted to hear something extraordinarily new from the foreigner. New contests followed. As Ahikar always came out as a winner because of his wisdom, the king of Egypt had to accept Ahikar's demand to give him the tribute of three years. Then Ahikar returned to Assur. On his request, the king allowed him to teach Nadan again. He was instructing him day and night, but at the end Nadan's body swelled and exploded. Thus, abruptly the story ends.[3]

The Tale of Ahikar in Turkic Literature

When N. Sims-Williams was working on Sogdian fragments[4] of the Ahikar maxims, I was looking for some Old Uigur traces. This seemed to be justified not only because of the newly identified Sogdian fragments, but also because the *Vita Aesopi* was already known from Old Uigur fragments. Since the *Vita* and the Ahikar maxims have some

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1 I would like to express my thanks to many scholars who helped me in one or the other way, i. a. Sebastian Brock, Jean-Claude Haelewyck, Grigory Kessel, Delio V. Proverbio, Nicholas Sims-Williams. Without their support my paper would miss many things, but, of course, all shortcomings are my own.

2 See a recent overview by HAELEWYCK 1998.

3 This tale has a long tradition from the Aramaic papyri up to-day's tale collections of Thousand and One Night etc.

4 SIMS-WILLIAMS 2014.

common traits,[5] it is still a possible option. However, here I would like to introduce a complete Ottoman Turkish version written in Syriac script. Already hundred years ago a Turkish manuscript written in Armenian script was edited.[6] Later, the same manuscript was re-edited by Jean Deny and Edward Tryjarski independently from the first edition.[7] François de Blois referred to a book of A. A. Martirosyan[8] where he mentioned another Armenian-Turkish manuscript from the monastery of Bzommar.[9] Though the language of the first mentioned manuscript is Armeno-Kipchak, it has still to be checked whether this one is also written in that language, but judging from the script used for it, it probably is.

On the other hand, in 1921 A. Danon published some excerpts from the Ottoman manuscript of the Ahikar tale in Arabic script, the manucript turc 33 of the Bibliothèque de l'École Nationale des Langues Orientales[10] commented by F. Nau in 1922.[11] This manuscript is dated 25, February, 1769.[12] Delio V. Proverbio edited and re-edited a large part of the same manuscript (F. 131v3 -135r19) in 2010 discussing the possibilities of a Vorlage of this Ottoman version as well as several questions about other manuscripts and the role the Ahikar tale played in the literary history of itself and within the larger framework of the large story collections like Thousand and One Night.[13]

Including another recently identified Ottoman manuscript,[14] we know so far of five Turkish manuscripts, two of the Armenian-Turkish tradition, two of the Ottoman literature and one of the Garshuni-Turkish literature. The last item is the topic of my paper.

Description of the Garshuni Turkish manuscript of the John Rylands Library

The Garshuni Turkish manuscript of the John Rylands Library has remained more or less unnoticed despite J. F. Coakley's detailed analysis.[15] It is the only Garshuni Turkish manuscript of the Ahikar story that is known today. Although a detailed examination of the manuscript yielded the result that it is apparently a translation from an Arabic Vorlage probably similar to that already published by J. R. Lewis,[16] it is a valuable specimen of the Christian Ottoman Turkish heritage of Turabdin.

5 KONSTANTAKOS 2013.

6 CONYBEARE in CONYBEARE 1913, 86-98, 174-184; 185-197.

7 DENY & TRYJARSKI 1964.

8 A. A. MARTIROSYAN, Paṭmuṭiun yev xraṭk xikara imasṭno, 2 volumes, Erevan 1969-1973, French resumé in vol. I, 62-70. Accordingly, there is a ms. in Bzommar: (I; 69): "K "Le texte turc en caractères arméniens Alim Higaren sōyledigi nasihat - don't le manuscrit est conservé au monastère de Bzommar sous le numéro *413, ff. 43r-66r*."

9 DE BLOIS 1984, 52.

10 DANON 1921.

11 NAU 1922.

12 PROVERBIO 2010, 198.

13 PROVERBIO 2010, 197-218.

14 Information by Delio V. Proverbio.

15 COAKLEY 1993, no. 20 (JRL accession number 38990).

16 LEWIS in CONYBEARE 1913, 130-161.

(1). Manuscript: According to Coakley's catalogue,[17] the manuscript which was formerly "Cod. 11" in Mingana's collection was required in 1915. It consists of 111 leaves, which contain several texts with the tale of Ahikar beginning in foll. 1b-43b,[18] followed by short aphorisms on fol. 47a-b, a history of the Apostle Paul on foll. 48a-89b, and finally by a "text consisting of questions and answers between a boy and a girl, preceded by the story of a merchant."[19]

Then Coakley remarks: "To judge from the catchwords, some leaves are missing (e.g. after foll. 10, 28, 38, 45, 46, 47, 88), and others displaced (e.g. fol. 44-6 which belong after fol. 20 in the sequence 20 44 46 45 21)."[20] It has to be mentioned that some of these items can be healed:
a) fol. 10b has the catchword sny = *s(e)ni*. It is true that the next fol. does not have it. But the order of the proverbs is correct: fol. 10 ends with Proverb 41 = Arabic 42, and Proverb 42 = Arabic 43 starts on fol. 11. No first line starts with that catchword sny.
b) Against Coakley's statement the catchword on fol. 28 is the correct one, it corresponds with the first word of the first line of fol. 29.
c) The third instance is interesting. The catchword on fol. 38 is gwnh which appears as the first word of the first line of fol. 39 as gn'h. But these are only different spellings of the same word *gunah* "sin".

Thus one can conclude that within the sequence of the folios concerning the part of the Ahikar tale no deviations exist.

(2). Date: According to the colophon in (Arabic) Garshuni on fol. 108b the scribe Sh. Gergis b. Ephrem finished his work on 5 August 2766 = 1854 C. E. The name and year also appear in a subscription on fol. 89b.[21]

(3). Script: Coakley calls the "writing [is] a stiff and rather disconnected serto, 17-19 lines per page, with rubrications"[22].

(4). Language: Coakley calls the language of the manuscript "a dialect of Turkish."[23] This is certainly correct, but one can go a step further. After examining the Ahikar tale, one comes to the conclusion that the language is mainly of the Azeri type as many other Garshuni Turkish texts. This matches one type of Garshuni manuscripts described by W. Heffening already.[24]

A good example for the linguistic classification is the admonition 16 which corresponds to the Arabic No. 17: *eg(e)r z(e)ngin ılan y(e)se x(a)lq der hukm(e)tind(e)nd(i)r v(e)*

[17] COAKLEY 1993, no. 20, 142.
[18] Ibid., 142, it reads "It seems to be imperfect." But this might be not the case.
[19] Ibid., 142.
[20] ibid.
[21] Ibid., 143.
[22] ibid, 142.
[23] ibid.
[24] ZIEME 2014.

darm(a)ndır d(e)yü yeyir ama eg(e)r f(a)qir ılan yese d(e)ler ki ač(ı)nd(a)n yeyir[25] "When a rich man eats a snake, people say, it is because of his wisdom, he eats it as medicine, but when a poor man eats a snake, they say, he eats it because of his hunger."[26]

Some examples of comparison between the Ottoman version in Arabic and in Syriac scripts

To give an impression how these two Ottoman versions match each other, here are some examples. It is obvious that they are not from the same Vorlage. I use here a simplified transcription.[27]

Version in Arabic script	*Version in Syriac script*
2. Ezzemān evvelde Sīnhārib[28] bin Serḥādum Çerçe padišahı idi ve hem Asuriyye hüküm eder idi[29] ve Hayqār anuŋ veziri idi <ve sāhib-i esrāri idi ve hem kātib-i tedbīr> idi[30]	S(e)rhadum padişah(ı)n oglı S(e)nharib padiş(a)h(ı)n ayam(ı)nda atur nin(i)vede bir ad(e)m var idi[31] adı X(a)yqar idi ve m(a)l(i)k(i)n veziri v(e) kat(i)bi idi çoq qar(a)r-sız canı idi v(e) pek mah(i)r h(a)kim idi v(e) pil(o)s(o)v(o)s v(e) mʿ(a)ruf(a)t ray v(e) t(e)dbir sah(i)bi idi mʿ(a)ruf(a)t ray v(e) t(e)dbir sah(i)bi idi q(ı)rq altm(ı)š ʿ(a)vratı var idi h(e)r bir ʿ(a)vratına bir köšk y(a)bt(ı)rm(ı)šdı ama g(e)ndünd(e)n h(i)ç bir züryatı yoq idi[32]
3. ve hayqar vezir gayet ihtiyar olub bir eyyam sihirbāzların ve	günl(e)rde bir gün ç(a)g(ı)rdı cümle

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[25] Fol. 6b9-12: ʾġr zngyn ʾylʾn ysʾ <ky> ḳlq dyr ḥẉkmtndndr w dʾrmndyr dyẉ yʾyyr ʾmʾ ʾġr pqyr ʾylʾn yʾsʾ dlʾr ky ʾcndn yʾyyr.

[26] As N. Sims-Williams explains, Sogdian No. 12 has also "medicine".

[27] For details cp. Proverbio's edition in PROVERBIO 2010, 197-218.

[28] Thus instead of MS Sincārib.

[29] "In early times Sencārib bin Serḥādum was the son of the the king of Georgia who also ruled Assyria."

[30] "And Ḥayqar was his vezir, <and he was the possessor of his secrets and his secretary in advice>."

[31] Fol. 1b7-9 srḥʾdym pʾdyšʾhn ʾwgly snḥʾryb pʾdyšhn ʾyʾmndh ʾtwr nynwʾdh byr ʾdm wʾr ʾydy "There was a man in the days of king Senharib, the son of king Serhadum in Ninive of Assyria."

[32] Fol. 1b9-2a4 ʾdy ḥyqʾr ʾydy w snḥʾrb mlkn wʾzyry w kʾtby ʾydy čwq qʾrrsyz cʾny ʾydy w pʾk mʾhr ḥkym ʾydy w pylsẉs w mʿrwptrʾy w tdbyr ṣʾḥby ʾydy qrq ʾltmš ʿwrʾty wʾr ʾydy w hr byr ʿwrʾtynh byr ḳẉšk ybtrmšdy ʾmʾ ġndwndn hč byr zwryʾty yẉq ʾydy "His name was Ḥ(a)ykar, he was the vezir and the scribe of the king. He had a very undecided (sic) mind, and he was a very skilful wise man, and he was a philosopher, he possessed a high education and had advice. He had 40 (or) 60 wives, for each of them he let build a palace, but from no one he had a child."

müneccimlerin çagırub anlara cevāb eyledi[33]	m(ü)n(e)ccim sah(i)blerini v(e) n(a)ql etdi halını v(e) '(u)qrlıgını[34]
baŋa nazar eyleyin[35] gayet ihitiyar oldum bir evladım yoqdur ve malım ve rızqım kesirat öyledir[36] (…)	

These examples may suffice to show that both versions differ from each other to a large extent, they cannot stem from the same source. I cannot give a definite solution to the question which was the Vorlage of the Garshuni Turkish version, but probable candidates are among the Syriac or Arabic versions now extant or lost. Sometimes the version is near to one or the other Syriac version, but more often an Arabic text seems to be the underlying original text. In one case, as we will later see, the Arabic manuscript of Copenhagen is a direct source of the Garshuni Turkish phrase.

Some peculiarities of the frame story

Next I want to discuss some special points of the frame story in connection with the question of possible candidates of a Vorlage, but as said before no final solution can be offered here, more studies of the Arabic and Syriac versions are necessary.

(1) The MS starts with an introduction written in red. In addition to the statement that Sanherib was king of Assur and Ninive the text also mentions "the city of Mosul". An Arabic MS in the Vatican is referred to by Assemani as "Hicari philosophi Mosulani praecepta."[37] Ninive is the old city while Mosul became later an important centre.

(2) The Syriac version mentions that Ahikar married sixty women, and the same number is given in the Arabic version. Only in later versions like one Armenian[38] and the Kipchak-Turkic which is dependent from the Armenian, Ahikar had only one wife.

However, the Garshuni-Ottoman version has "forty (or) sixty". This number is rather enigmatic. It can only be explained by assuming that the translator used beside the Arabic Vorlage a Syriac version where not the word "sixty" (štyn) was used, but the numeral for "sixty" which is the *simkat* (s), and the translator was not sure how to read it, for it looked to him like a ***mīm*** (m). To be exact, he used both numbers. Proverbio's text

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33 "When the vezir Ḥayqar became very old he called one day his soothsayers and astronomers and recorded to them."

34 Fol. 2a4-6 ġwnlrdh byr ġwn č'grdy cwmlh m'čym ṣ'ḥblryny w nql 'tdy ḥ'lyny w 'qrlygyny "On one of these days he called all astronomers and told them about his state and his barrenness".

35 PROVERBIO 2010, 207: ***bañā nazar eylen anlara cevāb eyledī***. He remarks in fn. 22: "La sintassi è qui precaria." But if one regards *eylen* as the imperative *eyleyin* from *eylemek*, the structure is not strange.

36 "Look at me, I am very old, I have no child, and my possessions and my living has become less."

37 CONYBEARE 1913, 128.

38 The other Armenian text has "sixty wives", cp. CONYBEARE 1913, p. 24.

has *altmış* "sixty", but he translates it as *quaranta*.[39] This could be a first hint of the number of "40". In my opinion, the translator used the number "forty" because it was widespread in the folk literature.[40]

(3) As Ahikar had no child, he adopted the son of his elder sister, who was called Nadan, and he gave him the best education. The Arabic text says "And when Nadan grew big and walked, shooting up like a tall cedar, he taught him good manners and writing and science and philosophy."[41]

The Garshuni MS has "Nadan became like the twig of an olive (tree)". Arabic ʾrz "cedar" = Garsh MS *zeytun dalı* (zytwn dʾly). This might be a substitution by the translator, not because he did not know the cedar, but the olive tree was more familiar to him, of course.

(4) Before Ahikar starts to offer his admonitions to Nadan, the Garshuni Turkish text mentions the room where it took place to be "a lonely place, a ***halvetmekan***", which is the equivalent of Arabic قاعة (*qāʿa*) or "parlour" as Coneybare translated it.[42] Apparently the Turkish translator had a problem with this Arabic word, as he rather circumscribed the word: *bir t(e)nha y(e)re v(e) bir halvetmekana*.[43] The first expression is the "lonely place", the second a compound of Arabic origin with the same meaning. It is in principle a double translation. Interestingly, the usual dictionaries have no entry of ***halvetmekan*** in Ottoman Turkish, but ***halvetgah*** or ***halvethane*** are attested.

(5) At the end when Nadan dies the text quotes the old biblical proverb: "For he who digs a pit for his brother shall fall into it."[44] This saying is of course from the Proverbs of King Salomon. But the Turkish translator adds *nice ki davud pag(a)mb(a)r söyl(e)di*[45] "as Prophet David said". Calling David a prophet is well known from the Islamic tradition, but also the New Testament mentions him as a prophet, e. g. Acts 2:29-35, explicitly 2:30: "David was a prophet (*nabī*)".

(6) The wife of Ahikar

According to the Garshuni Turkish text 19b1, the name of Ahikars's wife is spelled ʾšpgny[46] = Ašp(a)gnī". The name itself is not clear, P. R. Giaiero who reads the Syriac evidence ʾšfġny as Ašfaġnī suggests an explanation on Indo-European ground or rather an Iranian connection namely *asb* "horse" plus a word similar to Latin *ignis* "fire",[47] but the meaning seems to be strange in case of a female name. It was already pointed out that the Arabic form of the name follows the Syriac one while the Armenian and the

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39 PROVERBIO 2010, 207.
40 GÜVENÇ 2009.
41 CONYBEARE 1913, 131.
42 Ibid., 132.
43 Fol. 4b1: byr tnhʾ yrh w byr ḳlwtmʾkʾnh.
44 CONYBEARE 1913, 161.
45 Fol. 43a17-18: kydʾwwd pʾgmbr swyldy.
46 The letters ʾ and p carry the vowel mark "greek alpha" pointing to a pronunciation as Ašp(a)gnī.
47 GIAIERO 2005, 243 squ.

Kipchak Turkish forms Abesdan or Arphestan respectively Apesdan deviate for some unknown reasons.[48]

Notes on some admonitions

Finally, let us have a look into some maxims that form the core of the text. For the list of the Turkish text, I followed the principle to regard as one admonition a passage which is introduced by *ya oglum* "O my son!" written in red ink. As a whole there are 55 admonitions in Turkish against 66 in Arabic, but if consider that in one case the Turkish text combines three Arabic admonitions (4 # 4-6) and in another instance two items (37 # 37+38). A third case is that one Arabic maxim (9) is divided into two (8+9). The complete number of the correspondences is 58 against 66 in Arabic. This means that 8 admonitions are omitted. The sequence is perfectly congruent only for 1-3, then the sequence differs up to 24, from 25 up to 29 the sequence is congruent. From 30 up to 42 the sequences differ only by one. However, after 42 the Turkish has a significant gap so that 43 corresponds to Arabic 55. All this may be due to the work of the translator, but it can also mean that the direct Vorlage was different from the Arabic texts that we know.

(1) An enigmatic substitute

<u>Arabic (10)</u>[49]

"Be not like the almond-tree, for it brings forth leaves before all trees, and edible fruit after them all, but be like the mulberry-tree, which brings forth edible fruit before all the trees, and leaves after them all."

لا تكون مثل شجرة اللوز لانها تورق قبل كل الاشجار واجر الكل تطعم بل كن مثل شجر التوت الذي تطعم قبل كل
تورق الكل واخر الاشجار

<u>Ottoman (8)</u>[50]

badem agačı gibi olma zira badem agačı cümleden evvel yapraq verü ve cümleden sonra meyvesini yedirir tut agačı gibi ol zira tut agačı cümleden sonra yapraq verüb ve cümleden evvel meyvesini yedirir

"Be not like the almond tree, for the almond tree brings forth leaves before all (trees), but let's eat its fruits after all (trees)! But be like the mulberry-tree for the mulberry-tree brings forth leaves after all (trees), but let's eat its fruits before all (trees)!"

<u>Garshuni Turkish</u> (9)

"Be not like the date-tree, for it brings forth leaves before all trees, but lets eat its fruits after all trees! But be like the mulberry-tree for it brings forth leaves after all trees, but lets eat its fruits before all trees!"

s(e)n qurma agačı kimi olma ki h(e)pi agačl(a)rd(a)n evv(e)l y(a)pr(a)ql(a)n(ı)r l(e)k(i)n h(e)pi agačlardan sora m(e)yvesini y(e)dir(i)r ila ol tut agačı kimi ki cümle agačl(a)rd(a)n sora y(a)pr(a)ql(a)n(ı)r cümleden evv(e)l y(e)dir(i)r m(e)yvesini.[51]

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48 HARRIS in CONYBEARE 1913, XXXV.

49 LEWIS in CONYBEARE 1913, 133.

50 PROVERBIO 2010, 216.

51 Fol. 5b3-9: sn qwrmʾ ʾg̣ʾcy k̇ymy ʾwlmʾ k̇y hpy ʾg̣ʾčlrdn ʾwl yprqlnr lkn hpy ʾg̣ʾčlrdn ṣwrh mywʾsyny ydyrr ʾlʾ ʾwl tẅt ʾg̣ʾcy k̇ymyk̇y cwmlʾ ʾg̣ʾčlrdn ṣwrʾ yprqlnr cwmlʾdn ʾwl ydyrr mywʾsyny.

In Garshuni Turkish No. 9 the "almond-tree" (Arabic اللوز شجرة مثل) is changed into ***hurma agači*** "date tree" (Phoenix dactylifera). Most versions use the opposition of "almond-tree"[52] as opposite to the "mulberry tree" *(twt)*. Substituting the first one by the "date tree" as in the Garshuni text this opposition is partly lost. It is well known that the almond-tree brings its fruits after 7 to 8 months after the blossom. On the other hand, the date-tree keeps its leaves. In a hadith to sūra 6:98 of the Qurʿan it is said that Muhammad mentioned the date tree as a kind of trees that does not lose its leaves.[53] Anyhow in both versions the tree, being the preferred example, which brings first its fruits is the mulberry tree. The word ***qurma*** (read ***hurma***?) may be directly taken from a Syriac Vorlage for which I could not find any trace, but on the other hand, the word belongs to the Ottoman lexicon, too.

(2) Maxims become proverbs
It is often said that many of the maxims used to become proverbs. At least in one case also the Turkish translator held this opinion because as often as in real proverbs he added an *epimythion*.

Arabic (12)[54]
"The removing of stones with a wise man is better than the drinking of wine with a sorry man."

Ottoman (10)
"È meglio trasportare pietre insiene a un uomo di bell'aspetto che bere pubblicamente vino in compagnia di un uomo malvagio."[55]

Garshuni Turkish (11)
kamil ad(e)m ile var git daš daši h(e)r gün cahil ad(e)m ile š(a)r(a)b ičüb k(e)yf et-med(e)n eyüd(ü)r[56]
"With a perfect man go and carry stones every day, it is better than to drink wine with a stupid man without having fun."

The translator adds to this maxim the following moral (epimythion): "This means (*yaʿni*): ***cahile yar(a)n olmad(a)n var h(e)kime daš daši***[57] "Do not become friend to an ignorant, go and carry stones for a wise man!" There are similar Turkish proverbs of this kind, e.g. *Cahille bal yenmez, alimle taş taşı* or *Cahille bal yeme alimle taş taşı*. "One cannot eat honey with an ignorant, carry stones with a wise!" This is used even in today's political argumentation in Turkey.

One more example with an additional epimythion.

Arabic (59)
ويتحكمون يفهمون والحمقافالجهلة العسل مثل يحلا والمر يبيض الاسود وغراب السما في يقف الما كان ان
"If water would stand still in heaven,
and a black crow become white,
and myrrh grow sweet as honey,
then ignorant men and fools might understand and become wise."

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52 In Turkish texts ***badem***, the equivalent of the Semitic *lwz*, cp. DEMIR 2012, 10.
53 http://www.ask-the-quran.com/deutsch/search/Dattelpalme.html.
54 LEWIS in CONYBEARE 1913, 133.
55 PROVERBIO 2010, 218.
56 Fol. 6a1-4: k̇ʾml ʾdm ʾylʾ wʾr gyt dʾš dʾšyhr ġwn cʾhyl ʾdm ʾylʾ šrb ʾyčwb k̇yp ʾtuʾdn ʾywdr.
57 Fol. 6a4-5: yʿny cʾhylh yʾrn ʾwlmʾdn wʾr ḥk̇ymʾ dʾš dʾšy.

Garshuni Turkish (47)
eg(e)r axan b(ı)yar dur(u)r ise
s(e)rče ükseg učar ise
q(a)ra q(a)rqa b(e)yaz ol(ı)r ise
acı azva bal kibi datlı olır ise
c(a)h(i)l v(e) axm(a)q ol(a)nl(a)r d(e)ki xukm(e)t sax(i)bi v(e) ed(e)bli olıl(a)r[58]
"When a lotic fountain[59] stands (still),
When a sparrow flies into high,
When a black crow becomes white,
When bitter aloe becomes sweet as honey,
Then those who are ignorant and fool become wise and well-behaved,
y'ani eg(e)r bunl(a)r t(a)g(a)yy(ü)r olırsa cah(i)ll(e)r v(e) bulm(a)zl(a)r d(e)hi '(a)q(ı)llı v(e) f(a)h(i)mli olıl(a)r[60]
That means:
If these changes (happen), the ignorant and those who do not find (the way of knowledge) will become prudent and wise."

One observes that the Turkish text has four contradictions enumerated, not three as the Arabic version. But the Syriac has also these four items.
The congruence is not perfect:
Syriac: the sparrow flies without wings
Turkish: when a sparrow flies into high.
Syriac (62)
"My son, if the waters should stand up without earth, and the sparrow flies without wings, and the raven became white as snow, and the bitter become sweet as honey, then may the fool become wise."[61]

In addition, the version which Grünberg edited has the following maxim 76: "Wenn der Mensch ohne Boden stehen, der Vogel ohne Flügel fliegen wird, der Rabe wie Schnee weiss, das Bittere wie Honig süss werden wird, dann wird (auch) der Einfältige weise werden."[62]

(3) Mistakes (?)
The following example shows a rather clear case of a misunderstanding of the original text.
Arabic (16)[63]
"While a shoe stays on thy foot, walk with it on the thorns, and make a road for thy son, and for thy household and thy children, and make thy ship taut before she goes on the sea ad its waves and sinks and cannot be saved."
Syriac (13)

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[58] Fol. 11b12-18: y' 'wglm 'ġr 'ḳ'n py'r dwrr 'ys' srčh 'wks'ġ 'wč'r 'ys' qr' qrqh by'z 'wlr 'ys' 'cy 'zw' b'l k̇yby d'tly 'wlyr 'ys' chl w 'ḥmq 'wlnlr dḳy ḥwkmt ṣ'ḥby w 'dbly 'wlyl'r.
[59] For the word *b(ı)yar* cp. Zieme 2014.
[60] Fol. 11b18-12a3: y'ny 'ġr bwṇlr tġyr 'wlyrsh c'hyllr w bwlmzlr dḳy 'qlly w phmly 'wlyl'r.
[61] CONYBEARE 1913, 108.
[62] GRÜNBERG 1917, 55.
[63] LEWIS in CONYBEARE 1913, 133.

"While there are shoes on thy feet, tread down the thorns and make a path for thy sons and thy sons' sons."[64]

<u>Garshuni Turkish (15)</u>

nice ki ayag(ı)n yal(ı)n d(e)g(i)l tiz ʿac(i)l (e)yle y(e)ri tiken v(e) bitreg üzrine tarıq v(e) c(e)lde[65] *et v(e) tʿamir et gem(i)n v(e) qayıgın d(e)ŋiz(i)n dalgal(a)rı s(e)ni çev(i)rmed(e)n evv(e)l yoqsa qarg ol(ı)rs(e)n d(e)ŋizd(e)n qurt(u)lmas(e)n*[66]

"As long as your feet are not bare, make speedily and quickly a way, build a path and a hard ground on thorns and *bitreg*[67], and repair your ship, your boat before the waves of the sea turn you, otherwise you drown and will not be saved from the sea."

Here one sees that the translator misunderstood the passage about the aim of making the road, i.e. "for thy son, and for thy household and thy children" or simply omitted it, as one can understand that the phrase in his version still belongs to the description of the ground where to build a road. For "ship" the translator used a compound "ship" and "boat". It is worth noting that the Sogdian maxim (No. 10) has the correct rendering.[68]

(4) Explanations are added as it is the case in the following example.

<u>Arabic (23)</u>

"Spare not to beat thy son,
for the drubbing of thy son
1) is like manure to the garden,
2) and like tying the mouth of a purse,
3) and like the tethering of beasts,
4) and like the bolting of the door."[69]

<u>Garshuni Turkish (22)</u>

oglın v(e) ušagın vurmad(a)n ʿ(a)f eyleme zira evlad didig(i)n[70]

In the Turkish text the third comparison is omitted, but on the other hand, each comparison is explained by an additional phrase to explain the reason:

1) manure to the garden:

b(e)ngz(e)r bustan zibiline eg(e)r bustan zibiline eger bustan(ı)n zibili čoq ise eyü ol(ı)r[71]

"It resembles the manure to the garden: if the manure to the garden is a lot, it becomes good."

2) tying the mouth of a purse

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64 CONYBEARE 1913, 100.

65 REDHOUSE 220a *celed* "hard, level ground".

66 Fol. 6b2-8: nycʾ ky ʾyʾgn yʾln dgl tyz ʿʾcl ʾylʾ yry tykʾn v bytrʾg ʾwzrynh tʾryq vcldh ʾyt v tʿmyr ʾyt ʾmn v qʾyyygn dngyzn dlgʾlry sny čʾwrmʾdn ʾwl ywqsʾ qʾrg ʾwlrsn dngyzdn qwrtlmʾsn.

67 The spelling bytrʾg is dubious, perhaps a hybrid form **bī-t(e)rek* "without (Persian) + (Ottoman) tree". It is better to regard this word as a variant of ***butrak***, a kind o a thorny plant, cp. ÖNLER 1990, p. 364 (No. 81). Another possibility could be a borrowing from New Persian (+ Arabic) ***bī-taraḥ*** "Unmannerly, uncivil, uncouth; badly" (STEINGASS 1892, p. 222a), but without examples in which context such a hybrid word was used, it is difficult to judge.

68 SIMS-WILLIAMS, No. 10.

69 LEWIS in CONEYBEARE 1913, p. 134 (the division with numbers 1 to 4 is mine).

70 Fol. 7a15-17: ʾwglyn w ʾwšʾgyn wwrmʾdn ʿp ʾylh mʾ zyrʾ ʾwlʾd dydygn.

71 Fol. 7a17-19: bngzr bwstʾn zybylynh ʾgr bwstʾnyn zybyly čwq ʾysʾ ʾyw ʾwlr.

v(e) d(e)ki bir t(e)šbihd(i)r bir kise bagına eg(e)r ki kiseyi eyüce bagl(a)d(ı)n ise ičind(e)n bir šey zeyl olm(a)z[72]
"And one more comparison is to binding a bag: If you tied the bag well, nothing can get lost from inside."
3) bolting of the door.
d(e)f'e b(e)nz(e)r bir qapu kilidine eg(e)r ki bir qapuyı eyüce kidl(e)din ise o evd(e)n – bilin – qavi ol(ı)n(ı)r[73]
"Also it resembles the key of a door: If you bolted a door well, from that house, know (!), one is tight."

(5) Discussion on the following maxim which is at least partly very enigmatic mysterious.
<u>Arabic (25)</u>
"Get thee a fat ox with a foreskin,
and an ass great with its hoofs,
and get not an ox with large horns,
nor make friends with a tricky man[74],
nor get a quarrelsome slave,
nor a thievish handmaid,
for everything which you committed to them they will ruin."
<u>Syriac (24)</u>
"My son, get thee an ox that [is fat and] lies down, and an ass that has good hoofs, but do not get thee a slave that is runaway nor a maid that is thievish; lest they destroy all that thou hast gotten."
<u>Garshuni Turkish (25)</u>
The Turkish text starts with an introduction, a kind of header: *eg(e)r x(a)yvan al(a)cak ol(ı)rsan*[75] "When you will take an animal." Then the text continues with the details:
eg(e)r öküz alırs(a)n degirmi sümükli öküzi al
eg(e)r at yaxud iš(e)k merk(i)b al(ı)rs(a)n degirmi dırn(a)xlı x(a)yvanı al ne iri buyn(u)zlı öküz
v(e) ne s(a)qq(a)lı b(ö)yük adam
v(e) ne q(a)čxun köle
v(e) ne xırxız cari(y)e bunl(a)ra mal(i)k olub xvas etme
zire xırx(ı)s köle q(a)čar ya her ne ki t(e)slim id(e)r s(e)n g(e)ndüne tala edel(e)r g(e)ndüni[76]

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[72] Fol. 7a19-7b3: w̦ dk̦y byr<dh> tšbyh dr byr k̇ys' b'gynh 'ġr k̇y k̇ys'yy 'yw̦ch b'gldn 'ys' 'yčndn byr šy zyl 'wlmz.
[73] Fol. 7b3-6: dp'h bnzr byr q'pw̦ k̇ylydynh 'ġr k̇y byr q'pwyy 'yw̦c' kydldyn 'ys' 'w 'wdn bylyn q'wy 'wlr.
[74] راقي رجل تصاحب ولا. The Arabic word *rāqī* means "enchanter" (Steingass 564a). In the ms. Vat. ar. 2054 fol. 5v5 the text reads: دقناني رجل تصاحب ولا. The word دقناني can be emended to نقنا the feminine form to انقن "A man long in the chin" (LANE III, 968b, cp. STEINGASS 558b; cp. WEHR 428b). This may explain how the "bearded man" came into the Garshuni Turkish version.
[75] Fol. 7b18: 'ġr ḥyw'n 'lck 'wlrs'n.
[76] Fol. 7b18-8a10: 'ġr 'wk̇wz 'lyrsn d'ġyrmy sw̦mw̦k̇ly 'wk̇w̦zy 'l 'ġr 't y'ḳwd 'yšk m'rk̇b 'lrsn d'ġyrmy dyrnḳly ḥyw'ny 'l nh 'yrybw̦ynzly 'wk̇wz w nh sqly bywk 'd'm w nh qčḳwn k̇wl' w

"When you take an ox, take an ox with round bones[77] (= hoofs),
when you want to take a horse or an ass as mount, take animals with round hoofs, not an ox with large horns!
Do not possess for your own those people:
Not a man with a large beard,
and not an escaping slave
and not a *xırxız* slave. Because a *xırxız* slave flees or plunders what you give him for himself."

This Turkish version has many more details without parallels. I suppose that *xırxız* is a substitute for "thievish". First the Turkish text makes a difference between *köle* as male slave and *cariye* as female slave, as it is the case in Ottoman Turkish. In the next phrase the ethnonym *xırxız* is attached to *köle* and *cariye*. The ethnonym is apparently an addition by the translator who had in his mind some ideas about Kirgiz slaves.

Very enigmatic is the expression "a man with a large beard". Grünberg in his edition of the Syriac manuscript from Sachau 336[78] comments on the maxim 30 "Schaffe dir an einen kräftigen (?) Stier und einen starkhufigen Esel, und kaufe keinen gehörnten Stier; und geselle dich nicht einem bärtigen Manne.": "Die verschiedenen Versionen gehen in der Abfassung dieses Spruches mehr oder weniger auseinander. (...) Mit Ausschluss des letzten Absatzes, der aus K[79] zu stammen scheint, ist unser Text Originaltext."[80] The phrase "with a bearded man" belongs according to Grünberg to the Arabic version K (Copenhagen).[81] But the Arabic version edited by Lewis does not have it.

Conclusion

The Ahikar tale as a specimen of wisdom literature has a very long tradition, from the early Aramaic papyri (dated 5th century BC)[82] up to the modern manuscripts in the 20th century. Its Garshuni Turkish version is a valuable piece of the literature that Christians in the Ottoman Empire were familiar with. Whether it followed a Syriac or an Arabic version is still an open question. But what already can be said is that the translator, too, contributed a lot[83] to the creation of a new fascinating version.

nh ḳyrḳyz cʾryh bwnlrh mʾlk ʾwlwb ḥwʾs ʾtmʾ zyrh ḳyrḳys ḳwlʾ qcʾr yʾ hr nh ḳy tslym ʾydrsn ġndwnh tʾlʾ ʾydʾlr gndwny.

77 In the dialect of Van the word "bone" (in the literary language ***kemik***) is recorded as ***sümük***, ***sümüh***, ***sımik***, ***simüh***, cp. Van Gölü Ağzı, Engon Gökçür 2012, 41.

78 GRÜNBERG 1917, 31.

79 Arabic manuscript preserved in the Royal Library of Copenhagen.

80 GRÜNBERG 1917, 31-32.

81 Ibid., 32.

82 HOLM 2014.

83 Partly shown here, but a complete edition of the manuscript has still to be done.

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Pict. 1 Garshuni Turkish manuscript in John Ryland's Library, Coakley's catalogue no. 20. Folio 4b.

The Exorcism in the Newly Found Khara-Khoto Syriac Document

Shinichi MUTO
Daito Bunka University, Japan

Introduction

We, a project team of Japanese and Chinese researchers, have studied 228 Khara-Khoto manuscripts other than those in Chinese and in Tangut, which were newly found by an Inner-Mongolian archaeological research team in China between 1983-84.[1] Among them, the present author identified one manuscript to be a Syriac one.[2] As to the contents, the core thought in this manuscript is related to early Syriac Christianity.[3] This paper focuses on the practical aspects of the document, especially on the exorcism it deals with, for this characteristic is present in many magic-related words. The paper will approach the issue from soteriological, charismatic, demonological, and spiritual points of view.

This manuscript H 彩 101 (henceforth, H 101) is roughly written; the letters are minute and illegible; the types of letters are inconsistent. Above all, some parts are badly damaged. Therefore many words can be hardly deciphered. Thanks to our previous studies,[4] the main parts of the text have become clear so far. As to the content, the document can be divided into 4 parts with their respective lines (abbreviated as "l" or "ll"): (I) ll. 1-12); (II) ll. 12-35; (III) ll. 35-43; and (IV) ll. 44-47. The English translation given below is kept as literal as possible.[5]

1. The Binding by Magic

To begin with, our key word in this 'magical' text, *ḥarašūtā* (magic) as such is found 5 times, mostly as "the chains of magic" (l. 13; 14; 29; 31). The word "chains" is almost never used alone,[6] neither is the similar word "fetters". Both are metaphors of binding. In fact these two words occur as a pair (l. 18; 21; 27). The shorter form "the fetters and chains" is an abbreviation or lacuna of the longer "the fetters and chains of magic" (l. 29; ll. 30f.). Although "fetters" is almost always used with "chains", the only exception there is "(incantation) the

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[1] YOSHIDA/CHIMEDDORJI 2008.

[2] YOSHIDA/CHIMEDDORJI 2008, 232-239. This can be consulted for preliminary edition and editorial comments with a photo.

[3] MUTO, in print.

[4] MUTO 2010; MUTO 2013.

[5] The first English translation of the whole text can be found in MUTO 2013.

[6] The cases in l. 44; 45 are probably lacunae.

fetters" (l. 23). This shows a close relation between "incantation" and "fetters" just as that between "magic" and "chains" using similar words.

As the example of the Israelites in the slavery of the Egyptians (ll. 28f.) confirms, the humans here are bound. Who bind, then? Whose magic is this? We have an expression "their magic" (l. 37), i.e. "the evil demons' magic". More concretely, this is the condition that "the evil spirits dwelt" (l. 33). Now, who are regarded as being bound by magic? "The chains of magic" are tied to anyone including "the flock of Christ" (l. 13), "Your servant" (i.e. God's servant) (l. 14), "(the servant) of Christ" (l. 33), in another word, "the elected" (l. 15). These are not only tied, but also bring one to anywhere, especially to those places where one is in danger of death, e.g. "under the ground" (l. 23), and "the strong tides of the sea" (l. 24). The example of Hananiah and his fellows in "(the furnace) of the fire" (l. 26) in Daniel 3 has also something to do with this.

Who are "the evil spirits"? They appear in the latter part of the text, in l. 33, torwards the end of part II. This may suggest that their presence is so hidden that it is hard to discern. Although they are variously called,[7] they seem to be the same. According to the demonology of the Khara-Khoto text, they tied the chains of magic to everyone; they dwell even in the servant of Christ. Then, as it can be closely seen below, they can be dispelled; they go out, flee, and fall into the abyss (ll. 40f.). So they are to be defeated.

2. The Liberation by the Name

The theme of the whole document is not binding, but rather liberation. A verb *šrā* (to release) is found, in our text, at least 18 times: the most frequently used in all the words except for the particles. Particularly in part II, characteristic is a formula: "If anyone has written … , may one be released!". This is concentrated in ll. 21-25, continuously used at least five times. According to this invocation, one is to be liberated from the binding by magic, only "if anyone has written" the holy name. So the name is regarded as very powerful.

The most complete form to ask for liberation is: "truly in (the name of) 'HYH 'ŠR 'HYH , our (Lamb), the Son, (salvation) from the fetters and (chains) of [magic]!" (ll. 30f..). So we can find here this form "in the name of …" altogether eleven times. The frequent use of the word *āmēn* (truly) characterises this invocational text as well (found more than 5 times). The "name" here cannot be a mere 'sign' in the semiotic sense of the word, nor a 'name only' in the nominalistic sense. This is rather a performative language. The invocation of the divine name directly altered the reality, for it did bring salvation:

> He (i.e. a saint) earnestly prayed to the great (Victor), [that is, he tripled You, Re-

[7] That is, "the evil spirits" (l. 33; 41), "the demons" (l. 36; 40; 46); "the evil demons" (l. 37); "[the devils]" (l. 41).

> leaser!]. And You (i.e. God) released the chains of magic from the flock of Christ … the Son our [Lamb]. And she (i.e. the flock of Christ) was full of the name of (our Lord) Jesus Christ. And You released the chains of magic [from] Your servant. (ll. 12-14)

The most characteristic divine name would be 'HYH 'ŠR 'HYH above. In l. 30, this famous Hebrew in Exodus 3:14 is not translated into Syriac. Though transcribed in Syriac script, the Hebrew way of spelling is kept. This is because the original spelling is considered to hold power. The name per excellence is naturally that of the Trinity: "the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (l. 6). A man, who is probably a saint, invoked it:

> One (i.e. a saint) tripled You and invoked the name of the Father Who is …, [the name] of the Son Who is in Your bosom, and the name of the Holy Spirit Who is (among the gift). (ll. 9-11)

Finally the name of the Holy Spirit by itself is found: "And he shall be released in the name of the (Holy) Spirit" (l. 45).

The use of the word "power" also characterises this dynamism in this charismatic text (found 3 times), e.g. "By the great power of Jesus (Christ) our Lord (and our God)" (ll. 25f.). In other words, the power of magic is so strong that all the more overwhehning power is required to overcome it. So the powers of the good spiritual beings are also ranged:

> In the name of Gabriel, Michael, [the virtues], and in the name of the thrones, the dominions, [Cherubim], Seraphim, the principalities, the powers, … , the archangels, and of all the (holy) angels, may he be released! (ll. 31-33)

The more mighty names are appealed to, the more effective the prayer becomes. From the human point of view, one is released from the power of the evil spirits. But from the spiritual point of view, the evil spirits themselves are dispelled from individuals. Hence salvation here is the release from the magic of the evil demons; one saved is a servant of Christ in whom the evil spirits dwelt. So the salvation is regarded as the exorcisation in the Khara-Khoto manuscript.

3. The Cosmic Exorcisation

This exorcism is performed not only on an individual level, but also on a collective as well as cosmic level in part III:

> By Him the holy apostles turned [the peoples] from the mountain that preserved the demons; by Whom the hollow of the earth dispelled [the wickedness] from its surface; Who is the (hidden) power. (ll. 35f.)

Although it seems that only the humans assume the work of salvation, it is, in

fact, by the invisible power, i.e. Christ. Therefore "the demons went out; the sick were healed; the lepers [were cleansed]; [the devils fled]; and the evil spirits fell into the abyss" (ll. 40f.). This is the reason why Christ the Victor and His cross are praised and adored:

> His is the victorious cross; Who sought and fell … ; (by Whose victorious sacrifice) and by Whose mediation, … ; Whom the following worship: those above, those below, those of all the victorious belly, and those of all the holy (church). (ll. 42f.)

These worshippers include the spiritual beings ("the angels" (l. 39)), "the saints" (l. 19; 47), "inhabitants of splendors and the teachers" (l. 19), and "the apostles …, the teachers, the monks" (l. 47) who had died and now aid the living by their prayers (l. 47). So this is a cosmic worship. The use of the name "Lamb" for Christ also characterizes His act of sacrifice (found more than 3 times). This name is appealed to because He is the real Lamb for the lambs in the Passover to save "the sons of Israel from [the slavery of the Egyptians]" (ll. 28f.).

It is also in part III that the ultimate exorcizing of magic is wished: "May the evil demons and all their magic be dispelled!" (l. 37). The use of the universal word *kol* (every/all) may also suggest the totality of the victory over the demons. They are obviously concentrated in the final part of the text (l. 32; 37; 38; 38; 43; 43; 44), with the exception of that in the biblical citation (l. 03). This may suggest that these total exorcisations from the Cosmos are to be accomplished eschatologically. This would be the case especially in part IV: "for truly His mediation, the beatitude … released us." (l. 45). The word "beatitude" is closely related to the *eschaton*. Only here the name of the Holy Spirit singly appears: "he shall be released in the name of the (Holy) Spirit" (ibid.). We have only here "(You released him) from the tombs that this inhabited" (l. 46) as well. This suggests the final victory over the death. It is stated, therefore, near the very end of the document: "Thus and thus, the demons shall be dispelled" (l. 46).

Conclusion

In the newly found Khara-Khoto Syriac document, the power of demons is considered to be great. All the more, a mighty counterpart is required to defeat it. It is by the name that people choose that one can fight against the magic, for it itself has magical power from God. The ultimate victory by God over the demons is expected, which is the cosmic exorcisation. The high regard for the divine name in connection with the power is shared with early Syriac tradition. In regards to the salvation as exorcism, however, the word "magic" is characteristic in the Khara-Khoto document, which is not the case in early Mesopotamian Syriac literatures. The question for the sources of this difference is left for future studies. Between the geographic area from Mesopotamia to China, Per-

sian, Sogdian, and Turkic influences, among others, should be taken into account.

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Historical Perspectives

Al-Bayrūnī
The Twelve Apostles
and the Twelve Months of the Julian Year

François DE BLOIS

In the year 1000 of the Christian era, the Muslim astronomer, mathematician and polymath Abū Rayḥān al-Bayrūnī (or al-Bīrūnī) wrote what is probably the most important book ever on historical and technical chronology with the title *al-ʾāϑāru l-bāqiyah ʿani l-qurūni l-xāliyah*. This famous work was edited by the great Semitist Eduard Sachau in 1878,[1] and translated by him into English under the title *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, published in 1879;[2] currently I am working on a new edition based on the oldest manuscripts. In the course of his book, al-Bayrūnī touches on many questions of Christian and Syriac interest, of which I will discuss only one. This is in Chapter XIII, which is devoted to what in Greek are called *parapegmata*, that is: long-term weather predictions on the basis of an almanac, and in the course of his discussion[3] the author raises the question of why the Julian month February has fewer days than all the others, and of why this month, and not, as one might expect, the last month of the year, is treated as the leap month.

His answer to the first of these questions is not exactly convincing. Al-Bayrūnī argues that if the Greeks had given 30 or 31 days to February, then it would not be distinguishable from the other months. If they had given it 29 days in a common year, it would be indistinguishable from the other months in a leap year, when it would have 30 days. Thus, it can only have 28 days in a common year. Underlying this is apparently the assumption that if the leap month were not set apart in some way from the other months, then people would forget where to insert the extra day every four years.

As to the question of why they made February the leap month, al-Bayrūnī has a somewhat better answer, namely: "the *kabs* (here: leap-day) is appended to Šubāṭ (February), and not to any other month, because the First Adar, which is the *kabs* (here: intercalated month) of the Jews in the intercalated year (*ʿibbūr*), falls in it (sc. February) and (in one of the two months) on either side of it".[4] In other words, the adjustment of the Julian solar calendar by adding one additional day occurs (when it occurs) at about the same time as the adjustment of the Jewish lunar calendar by the insertion of a thirteenth month (when it occurs).

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1 See SACHAU 1878, *Chronologie orientalischer Völker von Albêrûnî*.

2 See SACHAU 1879. *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* with notes and index.

3 Ibid., Edition, pp. 251-2; translation, pp. 241-2

4 *wa ʾinnamā ʾuḍīfa l-kabsu ʾilā šubāṭa dūna γayrihī mina š-šuhūri li ʾanna ʾāδara l-ʾawwala wa huwa šahru kabsi l-yahūdi fī l-ʿibbūri yaqaʿu fīhi wa ḥawālayhi*. Sachau's translation ("falls on Shubâṭ and near it") is wrong.

Our author is of course aware that these two events are not necessarily simultaneous. The Julian calendar adds the extra day once every four years, while the Jewish calendar adds its extra month seven times in 19 years. His point is simply that the slot (if we may call it thus) for the addition is at roughly the same point in both calendars. The argument seems to assume that someone (either the Greeks or the Jews) consciously arranged their calendar so as to agree in this matter with the other calendar, but al-Bayrūnī did not pursue this line of reasoning.

From the vantage point of our historical knowledge, we would say that this agreement between the Jewish calendar and what we know as the Roman (Julian) calendar is not fortuitous. The oldest form of the Roman calendar must have begun the year in March (at about the time of the spring equinox), as is evident from the names of the months September to December (which are the 7th to 10th months counting from March), while the Babylonian ancestor of the Jewish calendar began the year in Nisannu, again at around the time of the spring equinox. So in both cases the natural place for inserting an intercalary month (in the Babylonian case, and evidently also in the oldest form of the Roman calendar) would be immediately preceding the beginning of the New Year; when the Romans switched to a purely solar calendar they retained the old tradition of executing any manipulation of the calendar in February.

The question of what sets February apart from all the other months is addressed also in Syriac church literature, not from a mathematical or historical point of view, but from a purely theological perspective. I think that al-Bayrūnī would have found this interesting.

The Syriac churches have preserved, as part of the liturgy for Holy Week, a decidedly curious text which lists the names of the twelve apostles and associates each one of them with one of the twelve months of the Julian calendar. This text was translated (from the East Syrian service book or *ḥuḏrā*[5]) and briefly commentated by Sebastian Brock in one of the annexes to his article "A dispute of the months and some related Syriac texts", published in 1985,[6] and fourteen years later, Brock drew attention to the fact that the same text is found also in a West Syrian service book in the Bodleian library, again in the same liturgical context, that is, the prayers for Holy Thursday.[7] To these we can now add the Syriac fragment from Turfan, with the siglum SyrHT 165, an incomplete folio from a service book, containing part of the liturgy for Holy Thursday, including a nearly complete copy of this same text. It is identified in the catalogue of the Syriac fragments from Turfan by Erica Hunter and Mark Dickens with a partial

5 See Dharmo's edition of the *Ḥuḏrā*, II, ܬܠܝ ult. et seq.

6 BROCK 1985, p. 188. The article is reprinted as no. VIII of Brock's collection *From Ephrem to Romanos*, Aldershot 1999.

7 See the addenda to BROCK 1999, p. 5.

edition and translation of the text.[8] The fact that this text has been preserved both by the West Syrian and the East Syrian churches, and in both cases in the same liturgical context, suggests that it is old, in any case older than the separation of the Western and Eastern churches at Ephesus.

Although this is not explicitly noted in the previous literature, it is evidently a hymn, composed of verses with in principle five syllables each, but several of the lines have six or seven syllables, suggesting that it has suffered some degree of textual corruption. Eventually it should be possible to produce a critical edition; for the moment I will restrict myself to reproducing the text as given in the Turfan fragment, with restoration of the damaged passages on the basis of the printed *ḥuḏrā*.

The hymn is embedded in a retelling of the story of the Last Supper. Jesus announces that one of his disciples will betray him, whereupon John addresses him with these words:

Tell us, Master,	ܐܡܪ ܠܢ ܪܒܢ
Tell us, Lord[9]:	ܐܡܪ ܠܢ ܡܪܢ[11]
Who shall betray Thee	ܡܢܘ [ܢܫܠ]ܡ ܠܟ
and separate Thee from us?	ܘܦܪܫ ܠܟ ܡܢܢ
Perchance Adhar Judas?	ܕܠܡܐ ܐܕܪ ܝܗܘܕܐ
Or Nisan Simon?	ܐܘ ܢܝܣܢ [ܫܡܥ]ܘܢ
Iyyar Andrew?	ܐܝܪ ܐܢܕܪܐܘܣ
Haziran Philip?	ܚܙܝܪܢ[12] ܦܝܠܝܦܘܣ
Or Tammuz Matthew?	ܐܘ ܬܡܘܙ ܡܬܝ
Or Abh Bartholomew?	[ܐܘ ܐ]ܒ ܒܪ ܬܘܠܡܝ
Perchance Elul Thomas?	ܕܠܡܐ ܐܝܠܘܠ ܬܐܘܡܐ
Or Teshri and Teshri:	ܐܘ ܬܫܪܝ [ܘܬܫ]ܪܝ[13]
the two sons of Zebedee[10]?	ܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܒܢ̈ܝ ܙܒܕܝ[14]
Perchance Kanun and Kanun:	ܕܠܡܐ ܟܢܘܢ ܘܟܢܘܢ
James son of Alphaeus	ܝܥܩܘܒ [ܒܪ ܚ]ܠܦܝ
and Simon the Canaanite?	ܘܫܡܥܘܢ ܟܢܢܝܐ[15]
Perchance Shebhat Judas,	ܕܠܡܐ ܫܒܛ ܝܗܘܕܐ
the month of sorrows	ܝܪܚܐ [ܕܟܡܝܪ̈ܬ]ܐ
will betray Thee	ܗܘܝܘ[16] ܕܡܫܠܡ ܠܟ

[8] HUNTER-DICKENS 2014, no. 160.

[9] The printed Ḥuḏrā has: "Tell us, Master, tell us, our true shepherd".

[10] Ḥuḏrā adds: "James and John".

[11] ܚ : ܘܪܥܝܢ ܫܪܝܪܐ

[12] ܚ : ܕܠܡܐ ܚܙܝܪܢ

[13] ܚ : ܐܘ ܬܫܪܝܢ ܘܬܫܪܝܢ

[14] ܚ + ܝܥܩܘܒ ܘܝܘܚܢܢ

[15] ܚ : ܩܢܢܝܐ

and separate Thee from us? ܘܦܪܫ ܠܟ ܡܢܢ

The names given here to the twelve apostles agree with those listed in Lc 6:14-16 and Ac 1:13, where we have two apostles by the name of Judas (Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot), and disagrees with Mc 3:16-19 and Mt 10:2-4, which list only one Judas (Iscariot) and complete the list with Thaddaeus (in Mark) or Lebbaeus (in Matthew).

The notion that there are twelve apostles, and that this is linked in some way with the fact that there are twelve months, twelve signs of the zodiac, twelve hours of the day and twelve of the night, is something that we find, not often but now and then, in early Christian writings. There is a very interesting article by Jean Daniélou, "Les douze apôtres et la zodiaque",[17] where a fair number of such passages are collected. The collection could be expanded, for example with a passage from Narsai quoted by Brock in his afore-mentioned article. Essentially this a rather banal notion, linked with the number mysticism that was so prevalent in late antiquity and the middle ages: there are twelve months, twelve hours, etc., etc., and so it is no accident that the Lord had twelve apostles. The twelve apostles fit into a prearranged cosmic scheme. However, in none of the passages cited by Daniélou, nor any other passage known to me, do we find a one-to-one identification of the apostles with the individual months, as we find it in our text. As far as I can see, our text is unique in this regard.

But is there any logic to the identification of Simon Peter with April, Andrew with May, and so on? I have played with various possibilities. I wondered whether each apostle had been assigned the month in which his commemoration happens to fall, but it became clear to me that this is not the case. In any event, one would not expect the saint's days of the apostles to be distributed evenly among the twelve months, and more importantly, Judas Iscariot is not a saint and does not have a saint's day. There are, as far as I can see, only two things in our text that reveal a certain rationale in the distribution of the apostles amongst the months. First, there is the fact that the two Tishris – Tishri the first (October) and Tishri the second (November) – are equated with "the two sons of Zebedee", that is: James and his brother John. However, the other pair of twined months – Kanun the first (December) and Kanun the second (January) – are equated with James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zelote, without there being any intrinsic connection between these two, except perhaps for the fact that at least in the two Lucan lists of apostles (Lc 6 and Ac 1) James and Simon are named in succession. But the decisive rationale of our list is that the unfaithful apostle Judas is identified with Shebhat (February), the shortest of the months. So essentially the implied logic of our hymn is that Judas is to the apostles what February is to the months, that is: defective. And this realisation explains another oddity of the

[16] ܫ : ܦܘܠܘܣ

[17] *Vigiliae christianae* 13, 1959, pp. 14-21.

hymn, namely that the enumeration of the months begins not with the beginning of the Syro-Julian year in October, but rather with Adhar (March), evidently for no other reason than to make February the last month in the list, and to end the hymn with the dramatic reference to Judas and his betrayal.

So in short: our hymn is about an analogy between Judas and February, "the month of sorrows", as it is called here. The other eleven apostles have been assigned their months more or less at random. The hymn is not really about them, but about Judas.

In the early Christian material collected by Daniélou there is one passage which, although it does not explicitly mention Judas, nor does it explicitly associate the individual apostles with individual months, does rest on very much the same assumptions. This is a passage in the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* describing the (in the view of the author) false prophet John the Baptist.[18]

> καὶ ὥσπερ τῷ κυρίῳ γεγόνασιν δώδεκα ἀπόστολοι, τῶν τοῦ ἡλίου δώδεκα μηνῶν φέροντες τὸν ἀριθμόν, ὡσαύτως καὶ αὐτῷ ἔξαρχοι ἄνδρες γεγόνασιν τριάκοντα, τὸν μηνιαῖον τῆς σελήνης ἀποπληροῦντες λόγον. ἐν ᾧ ἀριθμῷ μία τις ἦν γυνὴ λεγομένη Ἑλένη, ἵνα μηδὲ τοῦτο ἀνοικονόμητον ᾖ. ἥμισυ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς οὖσα ἡ γυνὴ ἀτελῆ τὸν τῆς τριακοντάδος τέθεικεν ἀριθμόν, ὥσπερ καὶ τῆς σελήνης, ἧς ἡ πορεία τοῦ μηνὸς οὐ τέλειον ποιεῖται τὸν δρόμον.
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> Just as the Lord (Jesus) had twelve apostles, in agreement with the number of the twelve months of the sun, in the same way he (sc., John) had thirty principal men, completing the monthly counting of the moon. Amongst this number there was one woman called Helene, that this might all be in order. For since the woman is only half of a man, the number thirty remains incomplete, just as in the case of the moon, the revolution of which leaves the course of the month incomplete.

To understand what this means, we need to take a look at some of the principal tenets of the sect represented by the Pseudo-Clementine literature. From the beginning, God is accompanied by two cosmic principles, a male-female syzygy. The male principle manifests himself in a series of true prophets, from Adam to Moses to Jesus, while the female principle manifests herself in a parallel series of false prophets. The true prophet Adam is accompanied by the false prophet Eve, and the true prophet Jesus, the "son of man", is accompanied by the false prophet John, "among those born of woman."[19] John, as we have just

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18 Ps.-Clement, *Hom.* 2, 23. In the *Recognitions of Clement* 2,8 (lost in the Greek original, but preserved in the Latin translation by Rufinus as well as in the fragmentary Syriac translation) this passage has been censored by the author: the 30 disciples are attributed not to John, but to the heretic Dositheus. Here the female disciple is called Luna in the Latin version and ***sahrā*** in the Syriac (both: "moon"), suggesting that Ἑλένη in the Greek *Homilies* should be emended to Σελήνη.

19 *Hom.* 2, 16, quoting Mt 11, 11.

read, had 30 disciples, corresponding to the days of the lunar month. But the lunar cycle is actually only about 29½ days, so one of John's disciples is only half a man, namely a woman.

The cited passage from the Pseudo-Clementines and our Syriac hymn read almost like the two halves of the same text. Let us fit them back together. The *Homilies* tell us that John, the embodiment of false (female) prophesy, had 30 disciples, corresponding to the 30 days of the lunar month. The moon (σελήνη) is of feminine gender. But one of these 30 days is only half a day, a defective (female) day, and this is represented by a female disciple. Jesus, the incorporation of true (male) prophesy, had twelve disciples, corresponding to the twelve months of the solar year. The sun (ἥλιος) is of masculine gender. But (and here our Syriac hymn fills in the gap) one of the solar (Julian) months is the defective month February, and this is represented by the unfaithful prophet Judas Iscariot.

I do not think there is any need to assume a literary dependence of our hymn on the Pseudo-Clementine literature, although the Clementine texts were known, at least to some, in Syriac translation. Nor am I claiming an affiliation of our hymn, or indeed of early Syriac Christianity as a whole, to the so-called Jewish-Christian movement, or, as I prefer to call it, Petrine Christianity, although an influence of Petrine Christianity on early Syriac Christianity is certainly possible. It is more likely that the notion of comparing the twelve apostles to the twelve months, and specifically of equating Judas with the defective month February originated in what one might call a "neutral" Christian environment, but then inspired the author of the Pseudo-Clementines to invent a similar model for the false apostles of John, this in keeping with the Petrine-Christian notion of parallel male-female lines of prophecy. In that case our hymn would have preserved the original form of the analogy. But it is an analogy which never really caught on.

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CHANGING MISSION AT HOME AND ABROAD: CATHOLICOS TIMOTHY I AND THE CHURCH OF THE EAST IN THE EARLY ABBASID PERIOD

Andrew PLATT
The Catholic University of America

In the history of the Church of the East there are few men who stand out to the same extent as Timothy I, Patriarch of the Church (780-823) in early Abbasid times. He had a long reign, though with tumultuous beginnings,[1] and helped guide the church as it came to terms with the fact that its heartland was now, more or less, coterminous with the heartland of Islam.

It is to that guidance that we will look today, specifically in the realm of the mission of the Church. In Timothy's day, no question was more poignant than that of living with Islam. Until Islam, Christianity had enjoyed a sort of ascendancy almost anywhere it went.[2] It might have taken time, and involved extreme hardship or even persecution, but what did not kill the Church made it stronger. Islam changed that.

In Timothy's day, an excellent example of this change was Joseph of Merv. We will not now go into details of Joseph's rivalry with Timothy, but suffice it to say when faced with the loss of what power he had enjoyed among his churchmen, he abandoned his faith, and was rewarded for his apostasy with the governorship of one of the Abbasid Caliphate's key cities, Basra.[3]
Joseph's case in early Abbasid times was not isolated, but it was not yet as commonplace as it would become[4]. The Christian faith was gradually beco-

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1 The events surrounding his accession to the patriarchal throne are provided in a variety of sources ancient and modern. See BUDGE 1893 (tr.), Vol. 1. Syriac (1893a): 197-210, vol. 2; English (1893b): 383-395. Thomas likens Timothy to Jacob from the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau; GISMONDI 1899, Arabic: 71-75; Latin 63-65; ABBELOOS-LAMY 1877 (tr.), Vol. III, especially col. 170-171. For modern accounts of Timothy's election and life see HURST 1986, 13-16; H. PUTMAN 1975, 14-22; BERTI 2009, 135-194.

2 See WILKEN 2012, 3-4, 288ff.

3 GISMONDI 1889, 63-64/72. For more on the subject see PUTMAN 1975, 18; BRAUN 1914, 141; and LABOURT 1909b, 13.

4 Though the sterile way the Chronicles describe his change of faith was potentially influenced, in part, by an avoidance of condemning Islam or the regime, it is just as easy to posit a lack of emotion on this to the somewhat more commonplace incidence of such conversion, especially in the context of the new regime. Those who threw in with the rulers were lucratively reward-

ming more and more marginalized within an area that - many today fail to realize - was as much a Christian homeland as Egypt, Greece, or Rome.[5] To a Christian, and particularly an East Syrian in Timothy's day, that marginalization might have seemed distant, if a threat at all.[6] There were those Christians, however, who could even in the height of the Abbasid *convivencia* see the beginnings of the social attrition that would slowly consume them. Timothy was one of them.

Berti argues that this was a major informing factor in Timothy's mission policy. In speaking of the missionaries Timothy commissioned for the provinces of Daylam and Gilan, Berti says, "On peut aisément deviner l'importance assignée par Timothée à la pleine incorporation de ces populations dans l'Église de l'Est avant une possible conquête islamique."[7] Timothy sought to incorporate new lands firmly into his church to enliven the heartland that he saw becoming increasingly battered, but this does not mean that he was abandoning mission to the core area of his confession. Instead, what it demonstrates is a differentiation of mission between his heartland and the traditional mission fields, between the interior and the exterior.

The "Interior" and "Exterior"

The Church of the East was, to put it simply, too big. It existed in too many locations; too many cultural situations for one blanket rule to consistently apply. This had been recognized as early as the beginning of the 5th century.[8] In 410,

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ed. Bar Hebraeus does get in a jab at Joseph, however, with a sodomy charge, though he is the only one chronicler who records this. See GISMONDI 1899, Arabic, 72, and ABBELOOS-LAMY 1872, Bar Hebraeus, vol. 3, cols 171-175.

5 For more on the Church in Iraq in the Late Antique Middle East see FIEY 1970; JENKINS 2008; MOFFETT 2005,Vol.I; andGILMAN-KLIMKEIT 1999.

6 There are differing points of view concerning the rate at which Islam became the dominant religion in the Middle East. Bulliet is perhaps most conservative and argues for a 50% conversionrate around 975 CE. See BULLIET 1979, 80-91. Bulliet's model argues for a conversion curve, giving a gradual slide into Islam, due to attraction, increased opportunity, etc. Michael Morony and Hugh Kennedy seem to concur with this point of view. See MORONY 1990, 135-150 and KENNEDY 2007, 376. For a much later date see JENKINS 2008, 112-113, in which Jenkins argues for a "punctuated equilibrium" meaning that there was a very gradual general growth of the Muslim population marked by periods of accelerated growth brought on by changes in society.

7 BERTI 2011, 71-110.

8 The Synod of Isaac in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, 410 CE. The Synod did not prohibit voters from among the Metropolitans of the Exterior, but it gave them an exemption due to the variety of factors including distance and expense that could hinder their presence at an election. In addition to giving the voting rules for the election of a Patriarch, this was also the Synod in which the acts of Nicaea were ratified and in which the general structure of the church was established, with the Bishop of Ctesiphon gaining primacy. For more on this see BAUM-WINKLER 2003, 14-17.

an East Syrian Synod (at the infancy of the role of Catholicos), had declared that five provinces in the heart of Mesopotamia were the "Interior", and that they would have the say in the elections of Patriarchs.[9] In return, a few provinces were declared the "outer" house, or exterior provinces,[10] but by Timothy's day this had grown to represent a considerably larger area geographically and culturally than those provinces of the interior. Because of this, the principles that had necessitated the initial distinction between inner and outer provinces were all the more apparent, especially in light of the rise of Islam, but little had been done to bring this ancient distinction up to date with the contemporary status of the Church of the East. In addition, it was becoming clear that the fringe provinces often had more freedom to conduct evangelism in a more traditional manner than did those provinces of the heartland. This meant that were the church to continue to grow at all, the lion's share of that growth would have to take place beyond the borders of the caliphate.

Timothy's response to this was twofold, treating the interior and exterior as two separate entities because they required at least two different approaches. We will look first to the exterior. Timothy's solution for growing the churches of the exterior was essentially to grant them considerably more control over their own affairs, though keeping a connection with the Catholicate. Part of this agenda was the appointment of more metropolitans. In listing the various metropolitans, Dauvilliers reports them differently in the years before Timothy and those afterwards.[11] Preceding Timothy the church was clearly adding new dioceses as the list of bishops grew to include those of such exotic locales as Socotra, China, and Fansur (or Sumatra[12]), but there was not a significant expansion of Metropolitans. On Timothy's entry into office a new trend began as a veritable explosion of metropolitan provinces were created, even as episcopal sees

9 These 5 were, Elam or Beth Lapat, Nisibis, Perath de Maysan (Basra), Arbela (Adiabene), and Karka de Beth Selokh (Kirkuk). In 410 the Exterior were limited to Fars (Rew-Ardashir) and Merv, but in the synod of Joseph (554) these were raised to Interior status, though Timothy downgraded them (more below). The Catholicos Theodosius I (853-858) raised the city of Halah (Hulwan) to a sixth position, which it maintained through the Middle Ages. For more on the structure of the provinces of the Church of the East see DAUVILLIERS 1983, 261-316.

10 These were Metropolitan provinces, i.e., they were considered sufficiently Christianized to warrant a Metropolitan who had a role somewhat like an Archbishop in the Catholic Church.

11 He presents the interior provinces, an assessment of the role of metropolitan in Mission, particularly as it changed under Timothy and later Theodosius I, then he launches into a discussion of the various metropolitanates, many of which were formed under Timothy. See DAUVILLIERS 1983.

12 East Syrian missions often followed trade routes; in fact, in Syriac the word for merchant, ***tagārā*** (ܬܓܪܐ), is often used as a metaphor for a missionary. See FOLTZ 1999, 62. Cf. LIEU 1992, 98, and MURRAY 2004, 175. It is sensible therefore that they would have been present along the maritime routes as well as the overland Silk Road. For more on the presence of Nestorian Christians in Sumatra see HEUKEN in ARITONANG-STEENBRINK 2008, 3-7. Cf. BAKKER in MUSKENS 1972, I:19-40.

declined. Though this growth of Metropolitanates slowed after Timothy, it did not stop until the deprivations of Tamerlane. See the following chart:

Year - AD	410	650	820	1000	14th Cent.
Catholicos-Patriarch	1	1	1	1	1
No. of Metropolitans	6	9	19	20	25
No. of Bishops	38	96	85	75	200
Total	45	106	105	96	226

In addition, Timothy tweaked the powers of these missionary metropolitans by granting them the ability to more or less create their own bishoprics. When asked in a letter by two of his metropolitan appointees, Qardag of Gilan and Yaballaha of Daylam, to appoint bishops for the lands they were in from among the monks who had come with them, Timothy replied:

Inasmuch as the ordination of a Bishop doth not absolutely require [the presence of] three persons, and ye in your country are free from this [regulation], ye have permission [to do so] by the power of the word of our Lord, in which everything standeth and is directed. Appoint as Bishops whomsoever ye and the pious Kardagh shall choose, and in the place of the third [person who should be present], let the Book of the Gospels be laid on the [episcopal] throne on the right hand; thus by the hand of God perform the ordination of the first Bishop, and let others be appointed by means of [this] third [person]. May the Divine Spirit direct and govern His sanctifications by your means even as He did with the blessed Apostles.[13]

Regarding this letter, Berti reflects that "la réponse de Timothée manifeste toute sa surprenante capacité d'adaptation pastorale et aussi, en quelque sorte, les limites de l'organisation de cette Église.[14]" This was an exceptional move because in granting this, Timothy was in many ways cutting the exterior loose, addressing the limits that Berti mentions. With the earlier requirements and the lack of bishops, a metropolitan would have needed to solicit the help of a neighboring province or the Patriarch, stunting the rate at which a province could grow. This new allowance enabled a province considerably more leeway.[15]

It might appear that by strengthening the exterior, Timothy imperiled the power of the interior, and thus the power of the patriarchy. This could not be farther from the truth. Timothy was solidly committed to maintaining and even strengthening the power of the Catholicos.[16] In fact it could be said that by

[13] BUDGE 1893b, 490-491; BUDGE 1893a, 267

[14] BERTI 2011, 97.

[15] DAUVILLIERS 1983, 272.

[16] In fact he sought much the opposite, to strengthen the role of the Catholicos not only within his particular branch of the church but among Christians as a whole. He did a great deal to further

building up the church of the exterior, he was strengthening the Catholicate by weakening rival sees. For instance, the metropolitan of Rewardashir had been a thorn in the Catholicos' side for centuries. This metropolitanate lay in Fars, the cultural homeland of the Persian ethnic group, and though they claimed a long heritage of Christianity, they were not one of the original provinces of the interior. In the synod of Joseph (554), however, they had been raised to such and had been given jurisdiction over India.[17] Bar Hebraeus tells us, "It is said that in the time of Timothy, the bishops of this region of Fars wore white, like secular priests, ate meat and married, and they refused to submit to the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, saying, 'We are the disciples of the apostle Thomas, and have nothing to do with the See of Mari.[18]'" There had been a number of previous Catholicoi who had attempted to reign in the recalcitrant people of Fars, but to little avail. In fact, a Catholicos of comparable significance to Timothy, Ishoyab II (628-643)[19] who reigned during the Arab conquest, had apparently stripped Fars of this jurisdiction in his day,[20] but the task had yet to be accomplished by the time of Timothy.

This presented the perfect opportunity for the patriarch to accomplish what could be called the dual facets of his goal in Missions abroad, strengthening new metropolitan provinces while simultaneously weakening those of the interior that would hinder communication between Baghdad and the far exterior. He not only finalized what his predecessor had set out to do over a century before, granting India its own Metropolitan and removing it forever from the administration of Rewardashir, but he also downgraded both the Metropolinates of Rewardashir and of Merv[21] removing them from those provinces that constituted the "interior[22]." In addition, he simply excommunicated the troublesome Metropolitan of Rewardashir, Babai, and appointed a new one, granting him the same powers he had extended to other exterior province. According to Bar Hebraeus:

this ambition we will look to these particulars shortly. For more on his emphasis on the superiority of his position see PUTMAN 1975, 52-60, also GILMAN-KLIMKEIT 1999, *Christians in Asia before 1500*, 136.

17 DAUVILLIERS 1983, 269.

18 ABBELOOS-LAMY 1877, Vol. III, col. 170-171. Berti notes that it was possible that this was simply Miaphysite Polemic through the pen of Barhebraeus, but he also points out that on account of the Persian cultural animosity towards celibacy, there is a ring of truth to it. See BERTI 2011, 85.

19 It is possible that it was Ishoyab the III, (650-660).

20 MOFFET 2005, vol. II, 269. Cf. MINGANA 1926, 64.

21 One can assume there might have been some lingering tensions towards the seat of the erstwhile Bishop of Merv, now governor of Basra.

22 DAUVILLIERS 1983, 262. For more on the saga surrounding Timothy and the province of Fars, see BERTI 2011, 78-86.

Timothy reconciled with them (Fars) and reunited them to himself and ordained for them a metropolitan by the name of Simon, instructing him not to eat meat, be wed, or wear white unless it was wool. He also permitted him, when ordaining bishops, to confirm them himself, without coming before the Catholicos for confirmation, like the bishops of other eparchies. Such is the custom to this day.[23]

In one move, though fraught with numerable tensions and challenges, Timothy aggrandized the role of the Catholicos, confirming that Baghdad declared both hierarchy and doctrine, while simultaneously releasing all of the provinces, including Fars to a more local and ostensibly indigenous control. This stood as Timothy's aim all along. It was imperative in his eyes that these churches at the ends of the earth should simultaneously be granted freedom to address whatever issues might arise in their unique purviews while still remaining connected to the source, the church in Baghdad. This was on the one hand to maintain doctrinal accountability, as in the case of Fars, ensuring that everyone was more or less on the same page, while at the same time providing a sense of continuity between the churches of the interior and exterior.

Some have seen this concentration in the Catholicate as indicative of a staunch inflexibility on the part of the East Syrian Church. Dauvilliers, for instance, remarks that this inflexibility was the eventual source of decline on the part of the Eastern Church. He accuses them of failing to allow for an indigenous clergy, tying them too closely to Baghdad, and then states that they failed to allow for a multi-cultural liturgy, requiring all hymns and offices to be conducted in Syriac.[24]

It is clear, though, that the multi-cultural element was precisely what Timothy was hoping to support in his endeavors. Indeed, he exulted in the multi-cultural aspect of his church as a selling point to outsiders. In letter 41, attempting to persuade the Maronites to join with him, he did exactly that:

Behold, in all the lands of Babel (ܒܒܠ), Persia (ܦܪܣ), and Assyria (ܐܬܘܪ), and in all of the Eastern lands, and in India (ܒܝܬ ܗܢܕܘܝܐ) and even in China (ܒܝܬ ܨܝܢܝܐ), in Tibet (ܒܝܬ ܛܘܒܬܝܐ) and likewise among the Turks (ܒܝܬ ܛܘܪܟܝܐ), and in every polity (ܦܘܠܝܛܝܣ) beneath this patriarchal throne... that one who was crucified on our behalf is indeed proclaimed in different and varied lands, races, and languages.[25]

While the Church of the East may not have met modem standards of multi-cultural accommodation, it was not nearly so far removed from the Byzantine model of translation and indigenization that Dauvilliers applauds and a far cry

[23] ABBELOOS-LAMY 1877, col 172.

[24] DAUVILLIERS 1983, 271. To support this he cites William of Rubruck who contends that he witnessed "Nestorian" priests carrying out a liturgy in Syriac which no one in the audience could understand. There is an irony in this, however, as one could easily point out the same fault in William's own Catholic church in Europe at the time and on up until recently.

[25] In LABOURT 1904a, 45. Translation author's own.

further along than its Roman cousins. Figures such as Jing Jing, the translator of many of the Dunhuang Documents into Chinese, and even the eventual Marcos, an Onghut monk who would become Mar Yaballaha III, as well as the caches both at Dunhuang and Turfan and a number of other silent relics scattered across the plains, deserts, and mountains of Central Asia stand as representatives of the indigenization efforts of the Church of the East. That we do not have a plethora more names to add to that list speaks rather to the ravages of time in inhospitable lands than to a lack of effort or conviction.[26]

The Mission to the Interior

At this point we have a picture of Timothy's policy concerning exterior missions. He sought to give the churches of the exterior a free hand to address their needs as they arose in the manner that they saw fit, all the while maintaining a connection with them through the seat of the Catholicos. This was important because not only were these churches distant from Baghdad geographically, but they were also distant from it politically. Even those reahns which in theory still laid under the thumb of the Caliphs such as Gilan and Daylam or Fars or even Merv, stood well removed from the politics of the palace.

But mission is not concerned merely with those peoples in distant lands. Jesus' command to "love your neighbor" involves the man who lives next door as much or more than the one on the other side of the world, and while the Church of the East had always been aware of this, never enjoying even the illusion of existing in a Christian state, they had never before faced such staunchly anti-Christian neighbors in their immediate proximity, even among the Persians. But although the slow attrition they were facing raised challenges it also presented to the Church of the East a marvelous opportunity. As mission in the traditional sense became untenable in the heartlands of the Dar al-Islam, this merely necessitated a shift in approach.

As with foreign missions, Timothy's interior mission work was multi-faceted. First and foremost, he wanted his flock to be exemplary members of society in the Arab world, seeking to win others over by their excellence. He encouraged them to be the best at what they did in order to not only impress the Muslims among whom they lived, but also to give heart to those among themselves who might be tempted to trade in their faith for social opportunity. In support of this, he endeavored to strengthen the education system for which his church already had a reputation, particularly the monastic schools of which he was an alumnus. He recognized that education was a key to church vitality as without a solid basis in Christian thought, there was considerably less incentive for those of

[26] To be fair, Dauvilliers in the same footnote in which he cites William of Rubrouck does point out the presence of these documents and relics.

intellect to remain in the faith. Secondly, he knew that not all of his flock was cut out to be among the intellectuals; therefore he sought to separate the remainder off, inasmuch as possible, from the influence of their Muslim neighbors. In a sense he wanted his church to be in the world of Islam but not of it.

We will look at each of these facets in turn, beginning with his efforts to bring out the best in his churchmen. Like the general who opts to stand at the front and fight rather than plan from the back, Timothy led by example, which is most clearly demonstrated in his personal interactions with the Caliph.

Servant of the Caliphs

Within a few years of cementing his patriarchy, Timothy was invited before the Caliph, al-Mahdi, to debate their two religions. He was not the first Christian to have done this or even the first Catholicos of the Church of the East. For instance, the Patriarch Henanisho I, in 691, was brought before the Caliph Abd al-Malik and asked what he thought of Islam. His response was, "It is a power that was established by the sword and not a faith confirmed by divine miracles, like Christianity and like the old Law of Moses." Though the Caliph considered cutting out the Patriarch's tongue, he relented, letting the patriarch go on the condition that the church leader would never appear before the royal throne again.[27]

It is a measure of Timothy's wisdom that when he came before the ruler a century later, his responses, if not conciliatory, did not rouse the Caliph's ire.[28] When asked about the Muslim belief that Muhammed is the Paraclete attested in the Gospels, Timothy illustrated through a series of syllogisms why this cannot be so,[29] and when, after more than a day of prior questioning, al-Mahdi asked him point blank, "What do you think of Muhammed", the patriarch responded by extolling the virtue of the Muslim prophet for the light he had given the Arab peoples, saying that he had "walked in the way of the prophets," neither slandering the Muslim prophet, nor acknowledging his prophecy. The Caliph proceeded to ask why Timothy would not accept the words of the prophet.

"Which words?" asked the Patriarch. "That God is one and there is no other," said the Caliph. Timothy agreed. "This belief in one God, I have learned from the Torah, from the Prophets and from the Gospel," he said. "I stand by it and shall die in it... I believe in one God in three, and three in one, but not in three different Godheads, however, but in the persons of God's word and the Spirit.[30]"

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27 Quoted in BAUMER 2009, 144. cf. LANDRON 2005, 29.

28 Timothy himself reported the proceedings. For an edition and English translation see MINGANA 1928, in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* 12, no. 1 (January 1928): 137-298. Putnam also conducted an analysis of the text with a French translation. See PUTMNAM 1975 169-327.

29 MINGANA 1928, 107-109, quoted in HURST 1986, 124.

30 From MINGANA 1928 quoted in MOFFET 2005, 351.

In this manner, the debate carried on. A myriad of topics had been covered, including the differences between the various Christian sects,[31] and though no one was declared a winner, Timothy secured for himself the respect of the Caliph al-Mahdi, such that he would eventually be asked by that same Caliph to translate Aristotle's Topics.[32]

The debate stands out as perhaps the highpoint in Christian-Muslim relations,[33] but for as much as was said in this debate, what is almost more significant is what was not said. Timothy is lauded as a brilliant debater not for the quality of his arguments which were adequate to remain valid as a faith without offending his hosts, but rather that he did not say all he could have said. He showed tact where many of his co-religionists would not have, and in spite of the fact that his honorable opponent was not pulling any punches. Al-Mahdi opened the debate with what to Muslims of his day seemed a surefire if crass argument against Christianity:[34]

As the patriarch later recorded the proceedings, he had scarcely finished the customary complimentary address when the caliph "did something to me which he had never done before; he said to me, 'O Catholicos, [how can] a man like you who possesses all this knowledge and utters such sublime words concerning God, … [say that God] married a woman from whom He begat a son.'" Thus, as bluntly as when John of Damascus forty years earlier wrote against Islam, the argument began again on the subject of Christology. But Timothy was no polemicist, and times had changed. He coolly agreed that the statement was a blasphemy, "Who would say such a thing?" Nevertheless, he continued, "Christ is the Son of God – not, however, in the carnal way[35]."

Timothy was not afraid to stand firm on what he believed, but he worked hard to do it in a non-polemical fashion, at least to his opponents' faces[36]. Many have taken his approach as representative of a somewhat modernistic faith dia-

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31 For the relevant passage see HURST 1986, 22. For more on the debate itself and Timothy's perception of key Islamic concepts see SAMIR in THOMAS 2011, 75-106.

32 Timothy carried out this translation with his friend who had helped him secure his bishopric and the patriarchy, Abu-Nuh al-Anbari. For more on Abu-Nuh, see CABROL in SAMIR 2002 (ed.), 295-320. cf. SWANSON in THOMAS-ROGGEMA 2009 (eds.), 397-400. In addition to this translation, Abu-Nuh is supposed to have written a *Refutation of the Qur'an,* though it has been lost. See LANDRON 1994, 53-54. For more on Timothy's letters concerning the Caliph's commission see BROCK 1999, 233-246. For more on Timothy at the Caliph's court, see FIEY 1980, 38.

33 Moffett states that it is the highpoint of Nestorian influence in Asia's two greatest empires, the Abbasid caliphate and Tang China. See MOFFET 2005, 352.

34 It remains so to this day.

35 See MOFFETT 2005, 349-50.

36 Other of his writings shows a less congenial picture of his opinion of Muslim authorities. More on this below.

logue, a "precious moment of civilized, intelligent religious exchange.[37]" But Timothy did not walk into the debate to pat himself on the back for a well-done bit of inter-faith communication. Sidney Griffith summarizes his attitude about the debate well in describing for us the preface of the letter in which Timothy wrote it out:

In it Timothy voices some diffidence about the "vain labor" involved in such a composition, and he complains that he is carrying out the task of writing it, "not without difficulty, nor without unwillingness." What may have proved daunting to the patriarch was the knowledge that his best apologetic efforts would carry little conviction for Muslims, nor would they do much to prevent upwardly mobile Christians from converting to Islam, especially from within his own Church of the East.[38]

Inasmuch as Timothy may have been discouraged by the outcome of the debate, he still wrote the proceedings down, and he used those as well as others to encourage his churchmen in their mission work in the inner house.

So if, at least in the aftermath of the debate, Timothy felt disheartened about its efficacy, can anything be said to have been positively demonstrated by it? Two things stand out. First, Timothy had access to the court. This episode merely proved what had been clear enough before. In a letter addressed to the bishop Barsahdê, he states, "If you have been wronged by that one, then bring your grievance to the patriarch of the whole (church)...I am in the capital and it is easy for me to do as I wish.[39]" Timothy's connections in the Caliph's court were multiple and secure and he was not afraid to use them. At one point the same Caliph with whom Timothy debated, al-Mahdi, initiated a persecution against Christians near the frontier with Byzantium. When word of this reached the Patriarch, he was able to gain an audience with the Caliph and not only put a halt to these persecutions but also achieved state money for the rebuilding and restitution of lost and damaged property.[40]

Secondly, the connections he had that facilitated this debate and his ability in the debate itself were all products of the educational system in which he himself had been raised. The early Abbasid period was marked by an intense involvement in the life of the mind, in many ways pursued, as Dmitri Gutas has shown, as an imperial benchmark, demonstrating the eagerness of the 'Abbasid dynasty

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37 JENKINS 2008, 17. Jenkins does go on to explain that "Given the setting, of course Timothy had to acknowledge the virtues of the prophet..." implying that the setting was not conducive to implying anything else. As great a service as Jenkins does in demonstrating the decline of Christianity in the Middle East, he stops short of truly seeking a cause.

38 GRIFFITH 2008, 48.

39 Quoted in HURST 1986, 20.

40 What is of interest here is that many of these churches belonged to Chalcedonians. Timothy sought to help them in spite of their disdain for his church. Thomas of Marga writes on this, see BUDGE (1893b), 447-448. Cf. BAUM-WINKLER, 60; KHANBAGHI 2006, 32ff.

to be seen as not only a true succession to the imperial and intellectual ambitions of both the Romans and Persians, but also as a genuine victor over the intellectual achievements of Christianity and the Pagan world.[41] A clear example of this is the words of the famed ‘Abbasid literatus, Abu Uthman al-Jahiz (781-c. 868) who was a young contemporary of Timothy, “the Christians and the Rūm [Romans, Byzantines] have neither science, nor expository literature, nor vision, and their names should be erased from the registers of the philosophers and the sages.[42]”

Timothy and the rest of the Church in the Muslim world stood as stark evidence otherwise. They have often been decried for a lack of innovation in theology and philosophy serving merely as transmitters of the science and thought of antiquity.[43] This is, however, expecting more of the Christians than would have been socially acceptable for them. We’ve already seen how Abbasid society itself limited those who were of a faith different than Islam.[44] If this were true in economics and government, why would it have been any different in the academy? It is only in recent times that the names of many of the great Abbasid Christian thinkers and translators, such as Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq and Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī have come to light in the West. Indeed many of the great Muslim philosophers studied under Christian thinker.[45] It would be greatly overstepping to say that all Muslim science originated among these Christians, but considering the social and eventual economic strain upon them, the attrition or what could just as easily be called brain drain wherein the brightest Christians might suddenly become their most ardent foes,[46] as well as the risk inherent in most societies in

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41 GUTAS 1998, 187-8.

42 From his ***al-Radd ‘ala al naṣāra,*** in HARUN 1979 (ed.), vol. 3, 303-51, at 314-315. Al-Jahiz stands out as most representative of this point of view, but it is by no means isolated. For more on this view see CHEIKH 2004, 103-109. See also GUTAS 1998, 83-94, and WALKER 2012, 38

43 Figures like Gutas stand out in this regard. See GUTAS 1998, 22, which is somewhat to be expected. What is not to be expected is the manner in which these perceptions carry over to those who are ostensibly writing on the merits of the Christians. Hurst for instance describes the innovation of the environment in which Timothy was raised as “on the wane,” citing Theodore Bar Koni. HURST 1986, 11.

44 Again, this is not to say that there was no room for upward advancement, but the heights to which one could hope to aspire were severely limited by faith, a limitation which grew as numbers dwindled in the church.

45 Al Farabi, for instance was surrounded by Christians, and it is not a great stretch to imagine that a student may be influenced by his teachers or vice versa. His teacher was Yūḥannā b. Ḥaylān, and his student was the above named Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī. See GUTAS 1999, ”Farabi” ***Encyclopaedia Iranica.*** http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farabi-i. Published 12-15-1999, Retrieved 10-14-2013.

46 Take for instance ‘Ali b. Rabban al-Tabari, (not to be confused with the more famous historian of the same designation) who had been brought up an educated Christian but who wrote a particularly scathing refutation of Christianity on his conversion to Islam. Apart from noting that a Christian did not have the option to write similarly scathing refutations of Islam, it is clear

the process of innovation,[47] it is unjust to completely withdraw the candle of original thought from their possession. Philosophical and scientific innovation are not survivor's traits, and by the 'Abbasid period, the Church was already entering survival mode. What is innovative, however, is the manner in which they continued to make themselves relevant while remaining distinct, in the world but not of it.

The Baghdad translation movement that we have merely touched on here is one component of that distinction and beyond reiterating that the Church of the East and Christians in general played a significant role in the movement, it does not need further explication at this point.[48] In addition to the translation movement there was the East Syrian presence in the medical field.[49] Again we have mentioned the Bokhtisho family, and the famed school of Gundishapur, which was the font from which Arabic medicine sprang forth.[50] What stood out was not merely the presence of Christians in this variety of influential circles, but the manner in which they conducted their lives. An episode from the life of Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq will serve to illustrate how a Christian might choose to pursue his faith in tension with the demands of his Muslim masters. When the Caliph al-Mutawakkil asked Ḥunayn, whom he had named his personal physician, to poison one of his enemies, he refused. After a year in prison, the Caliph released him asking him for what reasons he might refuse to serve his king. Hunayn replied,

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that the loss of youths such as this particular Tabari did not bode well for the church. For more on Tabari, see THOMAS 1992, 32ff.

47 This is present even in modern societies. See the revealing article by David Horrobin, "The Philosophical Basis of Peer Review and the Suppression of Innovation", *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 1990: 263: 1438-1441), in which he states, "Examples of total suppression of an innovation… are by definition nonexistent. How can one know about them if they've been suppressed? … Editors must be conscious that despite public protestations to the contrary, many scientist-reviewers are against innovation unless it is their innovation. Innovation from others may be a threat because it diminishes the importance of the scientist's own work." It is not so far removed to replace scientists in this context with Philosophers in the 'Abbasid milieu and when the religious incentive is also present it makes for a considerably more high stakes sort of game.

48 For more on the Translation movement that was one of the highlights of the early Abbasid world, see GUTAS 1998; GRIFFITH 2008; BERGSTRÄSSER 1913; BROCK 1991 in *ARAM* 3 (1991): 139-162; BROCK 2004 in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 4 (2004): 3-14.

49 A good study on this is Raymond Le Coz, *Les médecins nestoriens au moyen âge: Les maîtres des Arabes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

50 The school of Gundishapur was the preeminent medical school in the world prior to the founding of Baghdad. See REININK in MACDONALD-TWOMEY-REININK-GERRIT 2003, 163-174; LE COZ 1997 in *Histoire des sciences médicales* 31:3-4 (1997): 315-339, 327-331; and TAYLOR 2010, in *e-Sasanika* 11 (2010): 1-16.

Two things: my religion and my profession. My religion decrees that we should do good even to our enemies, how much more to our friends. And my profession is instituted for the benefit of humanity and limited to their relief and cure...[51]

It is safe to say that not all Christians would have conducted themselves in the same way that Hunayn did,[52] nor can we say that Timothy is the source of their inspiration to excellence. What we can say, however, is that Timothy, riding the same wave that carried his churchmen to these heights, sought to motivate its continuance. On the one hand that would take a continuous supply of Christians pursuing the highest offices they might hope to hold, and doing so as candidates of the highest quality, and we do know Timothy sought to ensure such a supply. In a letter to Sergius, Timothy writes concerning the appointment of a new bishop, "I am especially pleased with the well formed and developed qualities of this man about whom you wrote, as well as his spiritual way of life. For these (qualities) of a heavenly man transform an earthly one. I am also pleased with his sound and admirable knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, together with his ability in three languages." He goes on however to lament the shortage of candidates with such qualities, "It is rare that we consecrate such a bishop. Either he cannot perform these tasks at all, or (he can do them) only with great difficulty.[53]"

In a canon, Timothy declared on behalf of the church as a whole what he saw as the characteristics essential to lead in his church, and one could as easily extrapolate this to any position serving in the upper echelons of the government:

Three characteristics are necessary for a leader in the Church, that is to say a director, and governor of affairs. We must examine and see whether or not they are present in the person who has been chosen from the world. First, a natural intelligence; for he who lacks this, even though he possesses everything else, lacks everything. Second, the quality of the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of Wisdom. This is divided into the practice of the holy way of life and the *theoria* which adorns the true faith and orthodoxy. The third characteristic is a knowledge of the divine scriptures. This is most important for a director in the church.[54]

We can see from this the caliber of individual he expected to assume leadership in his church and in offices outside of the church. In addition, through holding a government office one might be able to extend that opportunity to other Christians. The clearest example of this in a near contemporary was Al-Faḍl ibn Marwān. Al-Fadl served as minor palace official in the regime of Harun al-Rashid, putting him in Timothy's context, and later was raised to vizier, the

51 Quoted from HITTI 1937, *251-252,* citing Bar-Hebraeus.
52 Jahiz' arguments against them would have held little merit if they had.
53 HURST 1986, 16, translated from Letter 54, Vat Syr 605, Folio 324v.
54 HURST 1986,18, from MAI 1838, *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio* vol. 10, 305.

second highest position in the caliphate, under multiple caliphs.[55] It is impossible to say that he and Timothy were directly connected, but he illustrates the possibilities open to one with talent and connections.

Beyond utility and encouragement towards those in high positions, the other component of Timothy's push in this area was in education[56], and this was for two reasons. First, one could hardly hope for quality candidates for any role if their talents were not cultivated. Secondly, the schools served as a point to begin forming the basic elements of worldview that might not merely provide men of character for various government posts, but could also prevent apostasy when the temptation might arise. Timothy himself stated, "Remember that the school is the mother and nurse of the sons of the church.[57]" For Timothy, education was paramount. Consider the following letter to his friend Sergius, headmaster of his alma mater:

And you our brother, Mar Sergius, remain in your place as on a rock, as on the precious cornerstone which, "is set for the rise and fall of many and the rise, i.e. for the rise of many and their fall (Lk. 2:34)." Guard in yourself all the glorious images of the excellent fathers through whom you have been spiritually born and reared. Educate the flock of the church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Tend them in the meadows of the power of the Scriptures and make them recline near the restful waters of virtue (Ps. 32:2)[58].

He goes on to more directly and materially support Sergius, granting him a significant degree of autonomy:

Manage the affairs of the monastery and the school with the correctness which is fitting for a wise steward. You should teach and supervise your brothers; they should not teach or direct you. We are assigning you five hundred *zûzê* for the repair of the cell about which you wrote us. If it seems to you that you should use it for something else which is needed even more, that is your decision, not anyone else's.[59]

Considering the importance that Timothy placed on "the School" as a source of strength in the interior house, it is useful at this juncture to briefly assess what materials might have been used in schools of that period. We fortunately have extant a text that might have served as a sort of curriculum of that day, likely

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[55] For more on Fadl, see SOURDEL (1991). "Al-Fadl b. Marwān" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, Volume II: C–G*, 730; There is also an entry in al-Nadim's Fihrist, B. DODGE 1970, (tr.), 278, and one in IBN KHALLIKAN-MACGUCKIN DE SLADE 1843 (tr.), *Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary*, 476-77.

[56] See especially, BECKER 2006, particularly salient is the chapter on the role of the monastery in education, pp 169ff.

[57] From FORTESCUE 1913, vol 1, 355.

[58] HURST 1986, 17. From BRAUN 1914/5, Vol. 74, 117.

[59] Ibid. 18, From BRAUN 1914/5 Vol. 74, 122-123.

written in the middle of Timothy's reign, the *Scholion* of Theodore Bar Kôni.[60] Bar Kôni himself states that the book is "a fittingly handy convenience for one who is a seeker after the truth..." useful for putting "before both auditors and students the standard of good thoughts.[61]" Sidney Griffith states that the text is "here put to the comprehensive purpose envisioned by the compiler of an introductory textbook in Nestorian theology,[62]" and later shows that the intention of the book is to erect a clear apologetic framework over and against Islam. "The Muslim presence calls for a clear intellectual statement of Christianity's most basic claims and so may be considered one of the original impulses that inspired the compilation of the *Scholion*.[63]"

In order to slow the attrition they were facing, the schools had to stand as an apologetic bulwark against the prevailing worldview of Timothy's day. Books like the *Scholion* demonstrate the importance of this apologetic endeavor. "The impetus for the production of a school manual of this sort ultimately lies in the apologetic imperative brought about by Muslim polemical pressure on the Nestorian community in Iraq.[64]"

The comprehensive nature of Timothy's interior focus, however, was neither limited to the schools and monasteries in which they were often situated, nor to the intellectuals in the capital, but his concerns ultimately extended to the lowliest of his churchmen. There was a system in place much akin to the *Millet* system employed by the Ottomans, in which different religious groups were overseen by their leaders who represented them to the Caliph.[65] This essentially limited meaningful interaction between everyday Christians and Muslims. A Christian in Abbasid Iraq was not any more likely to adopt the faith of his tailor or grocer than a Muslim in contemporary London might be.[66] But there were

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[60] We cannot directly connect Timothy and Bar Kôni, but it is most likely they were contemporaries. For more on this work see, GRIFFITH in GARSOIAN-MATTHEWS-THOMSON 1982 (eds.), 53-72.

[61] GRIFFITH in GARSOIAN-MATTHEWS-THOMSON 1982 (eds.), 59, quoted from SCHER 1912, 5 and 6.

[62] Ibid. 60.

[63] Ibid. 62.

[64] Ibid. 65.

[65] We take the term *Millet* from the famed Ottoman System (the word is actually derived from the Arabic *millah*, meaning religion), but it antedates the Ottoman Empire by at least a thousand years. The first Millets recorded were established for the communities of the Church of the East and the Jews in the Sassanid Period, see WIGRAM 2004, 227ff. See also MOFFET 1998, 221-222. The Ottoman system had its idiosyncracies that don't necessarily apply to the earlier system under the Sassanids and later the Umayyads. For More on the Millet System among the Ottomans and in general, see KARAVALTCHEV 2011 in *Journal of European Baptist Studies*. May (2011). See Also STÜSSI 2012, 340ff. and BOSWORTH 1982, 37-51.

[66] Which is not to say that it never happens, but it generally takes more than simply being in contact with a member of another faith for conversion to take place. For more on interactions

situations in which the incentive to switch faiths was much stronger, and it was exactly these situations which Timothy sought to address, specifically in the second of his synods. In 804, in addition to the regular ecclesiastical hierarchy issues common to most synods, Timothy ruled on a number of commonplace elements of daily life, from marriage to what books to read, each situations in which a Christian might find an Islamic approach appealing. We will look at perhaps the clearest of these situations however, addressed in the 12th cannon, concerning the relationship of Timothy's churchmen to their Muslim rulers in the courtroom. The text of the canon follows:

Is it right for a Christian man or woman (in arbitration of disputes), to seek the judgement of outsiders?
If they are Christians, how can they then go to non-Christian judges?! God speaks to them through the mouth of his prophet Elijah: "Is there no God in Israel that you go to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron?" If they go to non-Christian judges, how can they be Christians?! Paul speaks to them, "You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of another. You cannot drink the cup of our Lord and the cup of Beliar." Therefore, when people dare to transgress the Apostolic Rule, then (they must do) penance and almsgiving and (stand in) sackcloth and ashes.[67]

In issuing this decree,[68] Timothy was demonstrating a number of things to all levels of his congregation. On face level, he was prohibiting interaction with Islam at one of those crux points in which his congregants would be most susceptible to apostasy. Under ordinary circumstances a dispute between churchman would find arbitration from the most immediate clerical representative, with appeal going up the hierarchy potentially all the way to the Catholicos. Muslim courts offered an alternative to this. If a priest promised to be unsympathetic in a lawsuit, one might have incentive to seek arbitration elsewhere. Couple the appeal of a more favorable legal ruling with the scorn of one's peers either from one's offense itself or the stigma of seeking external arbitration, and whatever ties might be felt towards one's religious community pale in comparison to the obvious legal advantages of being a part of the community deciding one's case. Seeing that Muslim law weighs the rights and testimony of a Muslim more highly than of a Christian, it all-the-more enhances one's motivations for both conversion and external arbitration.[69] A fine example of this process in action is the situation we mentioned above with Joseph of Merv.

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between religious confessions in Abbasid times see FIEY 1980, 125. See also MORONY 2005, 334ff.

67 SACHAU 1907. 2:68-29; Translation author's own.

68 Uriel Simonsohn argues that this was not an unprecedented declaration, but while there might before have been precedent, there were not the same pressures to convert in most prior circumstances. See SIMONSOHN 2011. For a background on this issue in the broader context of Late Antique Society, see his first chapter, particularly the section on "Christian Judicial Institutions in the Sasanian Empire", 47ff. There is also a whole chapter on Christian institutions in the Islamic World.

69 For the disparity between Muslims and Dhimmi in Muslim law see BHALA 2013, 1309ff.

An additional motive, however, was to describe the opponents of his judgement as he saw them, for those who had an ear. He begins by simply describing those who would go before Muslim judges as outsiders (*bāryē* ܒܪ̈ܝܐ)[70] like those they seek judgment from. He then moves to describing these outsiders using scripture, audaciously labelling them as demons or at least under demonic influence, but in such a manner that any true outsider as well as most Christians might have difficulty nailing it down. Herein we can see both the political brilliance and scriptural capability of Timothy. He quotes Elijah's rebuke of Ahaziah's messengers (2 Kings 1:3), equating these outsiders with none other than Beelzebub, in Syriac tradition a demonic lord if not Satan himself,[71] and as if to drive the point home, he confirms this identity by conflating two Pauline scriptures; 1 Corinthians 10:21, on partaking from the table and cup of the lord and demons, and 2 Corinthians 6:15, a passage with a similar theme that is the only place in the NT in which the name *Beliar,* Lord of the underworld, is employed.[72] By merging these two passages, he is able to name his opponents, using Biblical names that would not immediately be familiar to the ruling Arab regime, the outsiders whom he is describing in this canon.

What makes his motives clear, however, is the name *Beliar*. This is because the word only occurs once in the Greek NT, and does not occur at all in the Peshitta NT. The primary Syriac text here uses the term Sāṭānā (Satan ܣܛܢܐ), a term that would have been recognizable to any Arab, as the Arabic term for a devil is Shayṭān (شيطان). It is reasonable then to assume Timothy purposefully manipulated the text in order to obfuscate his meaning to the outsiders he was speaking of, his Arab rulers.[73] By identifying those outsiders from whom judgement might be sought as the demonic lords *Beliar and Beelzebub*, Timothy was able to warn off his flock in the strongest possible language, without ever raising the ire of his political superiors, a move that ensured their continued support or at least indifference which was necessary for his church to thrive and continue.

70 SACHAU 1907,. 2:66-67:12.

71 MCLAUGHLIN in FREEDMAN-MYERS-BECK 2000 (Eds.), s.v. "Beelzebul".

72 HASTINGS in Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. 'Belial, Beliar'. See link below: http://www.studylight.org/dic/hdn/view.cgi?n=289. 1906-1918.

73 In addition, Timothy's use of the term *Beliar* indicates a familiarity with either the Greek text or the Harklensian which follows the Greek, and it likewise implies familiarity among the clergy to whom this canon would have been written. We cannot say whether Timothy was sourcing this directly from the Greek or if he was using the Harklensian text. We do know that he sought and acquired a copy of this text from a West Syrian Monastery. For more on Timothy's use of scripture and variant texts see HURST 1986, 87ff.

Conclusion

Timothy is at the heart of this period of our study for more than just his letters. He has been recognized by a number of chroniclers for the caliber of his term in office, but being labeled "Great" is not something one does for oneself. Later generations gave Timothy the label, meaning that they saw his activity as very representative of the goals and ideals of their church. It is for this reason, as with other greats, such as Mar Babai the Great, that we can look to Timothy as representative of the sympathies and thought currents of his church in this pivotal period. What this paper has sought to demonstrate is that the Mission of his Church was important to Timothy. He was an heir of the East Syrian Missionary spirit, but also a reformer who saw that changes needed to be made. As the centuries unfolded after Timothy's passing, the attrition that had begun before him increased, and Christians found it more and more difficult to compete with Muslims to occupy the posts that they always had, losing their positioning first in the realm of science and philosophy, then as scribes and court attendants, and eventually even in the medical fields.

Because of Timothy's contributions, however, even as the interior became more and more untenable, East Syrian hope became more attached to the works of their Church in distant lands, which continued to grow despite setbacks.[74] Because of this when Mongol hordes poured into Baghdad over 400 years after Timothy, the Church greeted them with open arms. Though history proved them wrong, they had every reason to imagine that their missionary endeavors had finally provided for them an earthly success they had always been denied, but that is a subject for another paper.

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[74] Such as the collapse of their mission enterprises in Tang China, or the fall of the Uighur empire.

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THE WESTWARDNESS OF THINGS: LITERARY GEOGRAPHY AND THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

Scott Fitzgerald JOHNSON

Dumbarton Oaks and Georgetown University, USA

I. Introduction

Thomas of Marga and Īshōʿdnah of Basra wrote ecclesiastical and monastic histories in Syriac in the ninth century. They were bishops in the Church of the East and spent their whole careers in what is today modern Iraq, at that time part of the Abbasid Caliphate. Between these two ninth-century historians, there is a rich variety of indicators as to their geographical assumptions and how those assumptions affected the organization and deployment of their histories. In this paper I try to demonstrate how a mental geography and especially the movement of monks around the East Syrian (and broader Christian) landscape were fundamental to the literary self-understanding of these two authors as they combined historiography with collective hagiography.

My title, "The Westwardness of Things," is borrowed and adapted from an article by the eminent western-medieval book historian, Michelle P. Brown, who, in a recent article entitled "The Eastwardness of Things" (2011), emphasized a generally Greek or eastward orientation to the intellectual history of the Carolingian period (particularly among writers and scribes from Britain and Ireland). My point in adapting her title is to underline what I perceive to be a similar, though reversed, phenomenon appearing at the same time (i.e., the ninth century) among ecclesiastical historians of the Church of the East. Despite the marvelous flourishing of churches planted along the Silk Road and in China by East Syrian Christians, from the fifth/sixth through the eighth century — as memorialized on the "Nestorian Monument" — the ninth-century historians of the Church of the East seem remarkably uninterested (or under-informed) about this eastward push.[1] They are certainly aware of the bishoprics to the east and occasionally mention the office holders there, especially when there is an important succession. Thomas of Marga explicitly mentions David the Metropolitan of Bēth Tsināyē (China) on one occasion and claims he learned about him from the letters of katholikos Mar Timothy I, who had been katholikos in Thomas's own lifetime (727/8–823). "David was elected to be Metropolitan of Bēth Tsīnāyē

[1] On this real-world movement to the Far East, see BAUM-WINKLER 2003, 46–51, and now WALKER 2012. Translations in this paper are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[China] — now I have learned concerning this man from the Epistles of Mar Timothy [I] — together with Peter his disciple who was alive and held the office of bishop of the country of Yāmān [Yemen] and of Tsan'ā [Sana]...".[2] Timothy I was, of course, famous for his organization of the Church of the East in the far eastern regions of the Caliphate and beyond.[3] However, the geographical frameworks of these historians are oriented towards the West, particularly toward the sites of prominence in monastic history: Jerusalem, Scetis (Wadi Natrun), and Sinai. I say this in full awareness that the majority of these two historical narratives take place within a relatively circumscribed region in what is today Iraq and southeastern Turkey. But when a geographical point is made, or when travel figures into the biography or history they are telling, more often than not that narrative is structured around a journey to the West, and often back again.

As basic background, Thomas, bishop of Marga, finished his *Historia Monastica* (or the *Book of the Governors*, as it is usually called) around 840. It focuses on the monastery of Bēth 'Abē (the "The Forest Monastery") located in Marga, in northern Iraq, about 100 km northeast of Mosul.[4] The whole narrative in one way or another revolves around this local site: thus, either the monks he describes came through the monastery (as he himself did), or Thomas learned about them in the library of Bēth 'Abē, which possessed a collection of monastic and ecclesiastical histories and biographies.[5]

His younger contemporary, writing about 20 years later in the 860s, was Īshō'dnah, metropolitan of Basra (at the opposite end of Iraq in the far south near the Persian Gulf). Īshō'dnah, though working within the compass of a shorter work, his *Liber Castitatis*, tried to take into account the entire monastic history of the East Syrian churches, with a specific emphasis on the history of the Great Monastery at Mt. Izla, near Nisibis, extending from the legendary Mar Awgen (?4th cent.) through Abraham of Kashkar (c.500–588; al-Wāsit, in present-day southern Iraq) and up to his own day. Īshō'dnah also wrote a long ec-

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2 BUDGE 1893 (ed. & tr.), 1.238/2.448. The suggestion has been made on the basis of this passage that David of Bēth Tsināyē sent Peter *from China* to become bishop of Yemen, indicating perhaps the flexibility and global reach of the Church of the East in the Far East (or even that the administrative weight of the Church of the East was, in the ninth century, in Central Asia and China). This view, however, over-interprets the text. Thomas does not say that David sent Peter from China to Yemen but merely that first David was sent to China, then Peter was sent to Yemen (presumably from Iraq). The syntax is paratactic/conjunctive rather than subordinate. Indeed, in light of the grammar of the parenthesis in between them, there is no necessary relation between the two figures and Peter could just as easily be read as the disciple of Timothy rather than of David.

3 On Timothy I and his influence, see BAUM-WINKLER 2003, 58–64.

4 See WITAKOWSKI in GEDSH 2011, s.v. "Toma of Marga".

5 The work as it survives is substantial: 400 pages in the Syriac edition published by E.A. Wallis Budge in 1893 (along with a separate volume of English translation). I use Budge's edition in the analysis that follows, though often with adjustments to his translations.

clesiastical history which is now lost. Pierre Nautin (1974) made the argument that this lost history is actually the original of the Arabic *Chronicle of Siirt* (1036), but that identification has been generally rejected since Fiey addressed the question.[6] I will discuss Īshōʿdnah below after Thomas of Marga.

In both works an orientation towards the West — by which I mean the Holy Land, Jerusalem, Sinai, Scetis (multiple Egyptian monasteries), Syria, Edessa, and the eastern Roman Empire — has a functional role to play in the historiography. There is a clear attempt to link the indigenous ninth-century East Syriac traditions of monasticism and ecclesiastical succession (particularly that of abbots of these monasteries) with the broader scope of eastern Christianity. This shared principle of western orientation is apparent in both works through geographical assumptions and emphases, as well as through the journeys that individuals make within the narratives. How such journeys are used historiographically is the primary concern of the present paper. It is also worth noting that both works focus on the early seventh century, though are written two hundred years later. I return to this topic of ecclesiastical memory in the conclusion.

II. Thomas of Marga

I shall begin with an example from the last book of Thomas of Marga's *Historia Monastica*, which is an independent history of the monastery of Raban Cyprian in Birta, a district of the diocese of Marga. Mar Cyprian, after whom the monastery was named, was said to be among the first monks to settle in the region, even before the famed Abraham of Kashkar (a central figure, as noted, of the *Liber Castitatis*). Cyprian was a local boy, from Bēth Magūshā, a village in the Birta district. Even though this village's name ("House of the Magi") suggested to Thomas that it was formerly a bulwark of "magianism" (Zoroastrianism?), Cyprian was brought up in a Christian household. He was trained in the Psahns as a young boy but then left home and devoted himself to the service of the Lord "by wandering about as a pilgrim in various countries." His first stop, however, was the school in Makabā that had been founded by Mar Babai the Great (one of many schools he founded according to Thomas; *HM* 3.2): he was there trained in "the glorious doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and in the books on the dispensation of life, and in expositions of them." Following this training, God "inflamed his heart and set on fire his mind with the desire, hotter than fire, of going to Jerusalem to see the holy place where Christ our Lord manifested to mankind his bodily dispensation for the sake of their redemption." The root "hot" (*ḥmam*) occurs multiple times in this passage, emphasizing the zeal with which Cyprian pursued this goal. Upon reaching the Holy Land he worshipped in "all the holy places": "the place where Christ was baptized in the Jordan, and the Temple, and Golgotha, and the Sepulchre, and the Upper Chamber, and the Mount of Olives." This is a rather standard list, without any detail about his route or experiences; in the same time frame, there are western pilgrims, like

6 NAUTIN 1974; FIEY 1975–1976; SCHER 1908–1918. See now WOOD 2013.

Willibald of Eichstätt, who give a much more compelling version (if similarly stylized).[7]

From Jerusalem, Cyprian journeyed to Mt. Sinai where "he went into the cave where the blessed Moses had lived, and in which the Lord showed him the constitution of all this universe, and where he composed the words of the Spirit, and where also God had spoken with Elijah, the great Prophet, and he offered up the sacrifice of praise to the Lord like sweet-smelling odors; and our Lord made His light to shine upon the understanding of the holy young man, and He prepared him to journey uprightly along the path in which there is no blame." The technique of stacking stories from the Old Testament and New Testament (and even the Apocrypha) on top of one another at specific sites is common to Christian pilgrimage literature in every language and almost certainly represents a structure that was agreed upon early in the history of Christian pilgrimage at various sites (through tour guides or through catalogues of sites and quotations from Scripture).[8] From here Cyprian goes "straight to Alexandria, and from there [he went] to the Egyptian desert, where he stayed some time going about among the monasteries of the holy men who lived in the desert; and he worshipped at the graves of the righteous and holy Antonius, and Pachomius, and Evagrius, and Arsenius, and Macarius, and Serapion." While the naming of these specific holy men and their graves is somewhat unique in these texts, the pattern that an East Syrian monk would, after making a study of the Scriptures (yet before taking the monastic vow) visit Jerusalem, Sinai, and the Egyptian desert (usually Scetis), is not uncommon, showing up in around 10 of Īshōʿdnah's 140 mini-biographies (see below). In fact, for important monks like Awgen and Abraham of Kashkar, these journeys west are building blocks of Thomas's (and Īshōʿdnah's) larger narrative strategy. Thus, after spending this time in Egypt and having lived in an Egyptian monastery "for a considerable time," Cyprian adopted the habit of the monk and thenceforth became an anchorite.

However, at this point an important detour occurs. Contrary to the apparent literary conventions surrounding such journeys — in Thomas's own narrative as much as in Īshōdʿnah's — Cyprian does not return to his native East at this point in his monastic career, as important monastic founders usually do. He will do so later, but that necessary part of the formula (or *topos*) is interrupted for a long, strange digression. Instead, unprecedentedly, Cyprian goes further west.

As Thomas narrates the story: he had heard of "a solitary island in the territory of the Greeks in which palms and fruits for food were found...and he persuaded certain traders of the sea and they carried him in their ship and bought him there." He was thrilled by his new surroundings and "it seemed to him as if he

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7 On Willibald, see now AIST 2009.

8 See JOHNSON 2008; 2010.

were in the Paradise of Eden." Nevertheless, despite his paradisiacal surroundings, Cyprian battled the war of an anchorite. "There in the desert he was victorious, and he was profited by afflictions by which as the body melted away and gradually disappeared, the soul shone and became radiant to meet the riches of glorious things after his sufferings and afflictions." Thomas says "[Cyprian] lived forty years in that desert" and thanks to some traders who came to the island by ship his fame extended throughout the world. But after forty years on the island, an angel visited Raban Cyprian and told him to return immediately to Marga "and to build a monastery for ascetics on the border of his village, and to become a spiritual father and a director of solitaries." Thomas connects this call explicitly to the call of Moses to lead Israel in his 40th year, a detail that only occurs in the proto-martyr Stephen's summary of Israel's history in Acts 7 (7:23, 30, 36). Cyprian then dutifully crossed the sea and returned to his village, which in the intervening years had been destroyed. So, he dwelt in the woods that are below the monastery that he would build later. Thomas states that Cyprian lived there for twenty more years, in the process founding a monastery and assembling a group of ascetics worthy of his legacy. Only when he partook of a meal of real, cooked food once, when it was forced upon him by his disciples, did he pass away: this is because he was used to a diet of only bread and water and the rich food was too much for his weakened body.

One perceives that Raban Cyprian's story was a foundational narrative for Thomas of Marga's local monastic world. This narrative was written before the *Historia Monastica* and, along with the joint life of Gabriel and Paul, stands separately almost as a coda in the final Book Six of the *Historia Monastica*. His pilgrimages to the Holy Sites of eastern Christendom, both biblical (New Testament corresponding to Jerusalem; Old Testament to Sinai) and monastic (Egyptian desert) are important, I would argue, for the manner in which East Syrian ecclesiastical historians conceived of their aims and craft. What is especially remarkable in this story is Cyprian's sojourn on a "Greek island," presumably within the bounds of the Chalcedonian Roman empire, though Thomas may be attempting to harken back to a Nicene or even pre-Nicene world: there are no chronological indicators in the narrative.

Another story from Thomas of Marga exemplifies further some of these issues in the narrative (and has a parallel in Īshōʻdnah as well). This is the story of the embassy of the East Syrian monks sent to meet the emperor Heraclius at Aleppo. The embassy was led by Īshōʻyahb II of Gdālā (r. 628–645), the first katholikos following the enforced vacancy after Grigor I (605–c.610). It was organized, according to Thomas, by the Sasanian king Shērōi (i.e., Kavadh II), who took a different view of relations with the Christians than his father Khusrau II Aparvez and sought peace among the churches of the Persian Christians.[9]

[9] Shērōi/Kavadh II had in fact assassinated his father Khusrau II [590–628] along with 18 of his brothers in 628 but ruled only a few months thereafter. It seems that the embassy was actually

Īshōʻyahb II was asked to collect a group of metropolitans and bishops and go to meet the emperor Heraclius, "at the cost and expense of the [Persian] king, bearing his letters and greetings, saying, 'Let them make to pass away and to be blotted out all the discord and enmity which have existed between the Persians and the Greeks, and by their wisdom let them sow peace in the two countries'." Īshōʻyahb II chose Quryāqōs, bishop of Nisibis, Paul, bishop of Adiabene, Gabriel of Karkā of Bēth Slōq (Kirkuk), and others, including the future katholikos Īshōʻyahb III and the infamous Sāhdōnā (on whom more below). According to Thomas their embassy was well received by the Romans, "as if they had been angels of God." Thomas does not mention that this meeting took place in Aleppo, and he does not give a precise date (facts known from other texts). Nor does he mention the later traditions that 1) Īshōʻyahb II made the statement "your faith is the same as ours" (Bar Hebraeus, a "hostile" witness); or 2) that Īshōʻyahb II gave Heraclius back the True Cross, taken when the Persians sacked Jerusalem in 614. The True Cross had already been given back by Shahrbaraz in 629, the Shah who (as general under Khusrau II) had originally sacked Jerusalem and Damascus. A festival was celebrated in that year in Jerusalem to mark its return before Heraclius' march back north.

However, in the next chapter of the *Historia Monastica* Thomas does mention that while in the West, specifically while sojourning in the city of Antioch, the future katholikos Īshōʻyahb III (kath. 649–659; of Adiabene / Bēth ʻAbē / bishop of Nineveh / metropolitan of Arbela) saw a white marble sarcophagus with a cross on it, which he learned worked miracles because inside it were "bones and portions of the bodies of the blessed Apostles." Thomas says that Īshōʻyahb III was "hot with all the desire of his love for that casket in which these were laid" and prayed that he might be able to bring it back to his homeland. Thomas continues, "And having vexed and tortured himself [by scheming] all manner of devices, and not knowing what to do, he gave this matter to God, [asking] that while he, that is Mar Īshōʻyahb, used all human efforts, Christ would protect and defend him in a Divine manner. And this actually happened, for he stole it and brought it with him here with all the honor due to the holy pearls which were therein." (We aren't told how he physically moved the sarcophagus back to Persia, but presumably this was one thing he needed help with!) Thomas then adds a confirming word of his own, "And we are certain in our opinion and judgment that this matter was wrought thus, for it is spoken of to this day in the city of Antioch, even as it came down by tradition, and was handed on to us by those men who were before us in this monastery."

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organized by Khusrau's daughter, Queen Bōrān [Borandukht], during her one year of sole rule in 630–631 CE, though Shērōi/Kavadh II had also sought peace with the Romans, as had the famous general Shahrbaraz, who as Shah was responsible for returning the True Cross to Heraclius.

This is another important example of the value placed on the West, or the "directionality" of these East Syrian historians. The embassy itself highlights the Christians in Persia as somehow "part of the same tribe" as the Christians in the Roman Empire, though Thomas knew very well this was not the case. But from Thomas's historiographical perspective it was perfectly natural that the Persian king would choose such leaders to represent the Persia before Heraclius. Importantly, when describing Īshō'yahb III's encounter with the sarcophagus, Thomas uses the same verb, "grew hot" (*ēthḥamam*), to describe Īshō'yahb's desire to bring it back, as he did to describe Cyprian's desire to visit the Holy Land. From Thomas's perspective, for both of these figures, there was something energizing about being on site in the West among the physical ruins and relics of the Bible. The "complete voracious desire" (*culhā ya'nuthā*) in both cases seems to overtake the senses of the two holy men, not in a sexual sense but in a sense of greediness. They deeply want *to own* this physical experience for themselves and, by extension, for their monasteries.

Further, the return home from the West is significant in both cases. Both Raban Cyprian and Mar Īshō'yahb III bring something back and are led by direct divine guidance or intervention. Cyprian brings back his own holiness, which has grown to worldwide proportions since leaving the East, and his return is commanded by a visit from an angel. Īshō'yahb III — who along with his cohort in the ecclesiastical embassy are themselves received by the Romans "like angels" — is finally so compelled, after trying every stratagem he knows, simply "to steal" the sarcophagus, and apparently receives divine authority and assistance in doing so.

III. Īshō'dnah of Basra

Īshō'dnah of Basra links the subsequent spread of monasticism throughout the Church of the East in Mesopotamia, Persia, and further East to the Great Monastery at Mt. Izla almost exclusively. For its founder/refounder, Abraham of Kashkar, his visits (or pilgrimages) to Scetis, Jerusalem, and Sinai are, according to Īshō'dnah, catalysts for his monastic reforms in East Syrian monasticism. And, in his description, East Syrian monasticism is basically an Egyptian form of monasticism (coenobitic and anchoritic/eremitic combined) imported into the Church of the East. Mar Awgen, legendary originator of Syriac monasticism, was himself an Egyptian monk who came east, and was said to have founded the first monastery in the East Syrian tradition precisely at Mt. Izla. The relationship between Awgen and Abraham of Kashkar as twin/successor monastic founders has been studied at length by Florence Jullien.[10] Suffice it to say that the Church of the East's fundamental link to western monasticism is a central topic for Īshō'dnah, and Awgen and Abraham of Kashkar are hinges for the narrative as a whole.

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10 Florence JULLIEN 2008.

The ninth-century *Liber Castitatis* is usually seen as a biographical source, and the scholarship devoted to it is mostly concerned with the authenticity of the historical details it records in its catalogue of saints.[11] However, from a structural point of view, travel is a dominant element, even for East Syriac saints who do not go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land: travel, and more generally, Īshōʿdnah's interest in geography and regional onomastics serve to localize each individual story while also giving a sense of constant motion to the whole. Those monks who do travel to the West primarily frequent Jerusalem, but Scetis is prominent, and Sinai and other cities are mentioned. Īshōʿdnah's text also acts as an archive of the places that his monks travel to, the experiences they have, and even the troubles they get themselves into. The there and back again motif, sometimes subverted by Īshōʿdnah for literary effect, provides a ring composition, or bookends, within which various types of data can be juxtaposed together.

I begin with one of the more significant examples in the *Liber Castitatis*. In chapter 23 Īshōʿdnah describes the Life of Holy Mar Yohanān (John) of Qanqal.[12] John began his ministry under the tutelage of Babai the Great.[13] Later he traveled to both Jerusalem and Scetis, but ended up settling in Emesa. After two years serving as curator of the relic of the head of John the Baptist in that city, he was ordained a priest by the bishop. After the bishop's death, however, another was ordained, not John. The faithful of the city began to complain because they preferred John to the new bishop. John left the city and came to the village of Arzon, near to the town of Qanqal. After John had gained a number of disciples in that place, John the Baptist visited him in a dream saying, "Return to the city of Emesa; go to the place where my shrine is, remove a lock of my hair — I offer you this from my own head — and come and build for yourself a monastery in this place." John does exactly what he is commanded, and in the end enshrines the stolen lock of hair into the eastern wall of the altar of the monastery church he built. Later in life, when he was near to death, John asked his disciples to place his body in the ground outside the door of the church, so that those going in and out would tread upon him. This was considered a sign of his humility.

The ending of this story is very similar to many others in the collection: the saint comes to his old age with disciples around him, he dies a peaceful and blessed death, and then is almost always buried in or around the monastery

[11] It has not fared terribly well in such analyses, especially when compared with Thomas of Marga. However, this may not be true of Īshōʿdnah himself but just of the state of the text as it has come down to us; see Fiey's comment on the reliability of the scribal tradition: "Jusqu'où celle-ci a-t-elle été, et son auteur a-t-il toujours été scrupuleux de respecter l'oeuvre originale? Les remarques qui suivent vont justifier quelques doutes à cet égard."

[12] CHABOT 1896, 13–14; BEDJAN 1901, 453–454. For Qanqal, see Christelle JULLIEN 2009, 180.

[13] Most likely after Babai's return to the Great Monastery on Mt. Izla in 604.

church that he founded. Thus, there is a reinforcement of the sense of "foundation" in this work — the physical construction that takes place in the narrative is always supported by the spiritual interment of the saint, the very builder, in the fabric of the church. In nearly every one of these mini-biographies, there is a sense of closure and completion that is accomplished in the death and burial of the saint.

However, for John of Qanqal the early part of the narrative is much grander than most of Īshō'dnah's stories, since it includes sites of global prominence in late antique Christendom (namely, Jerusalem and Scetis). Emesa, as a locale in the *Liber Castitatis*, is unique to John, and indicates that he traveled the full length of the eastern Mediterranean coastline and no doubt interacted with both Chalcedonian and Miaphysite Christians.[14] In fact, his ordination to the priesthood was probably under a Chalcedonian bishop and, likewise, his expulsion from Emesa was most likely due to conflicts with the Chalcedonian successor. (Or, one might posit that he left Emesa after its fall to the Arabs in 637, though that seems less likely.) The dream, which he had at Qanqal, thus provides a catalyst for the foundation, and his burial *in situ*, in a circular manner, serves to confirm the truth of the whole story. John is represented as a relic collector in addition to a founder, and his narrative provides an archive (even an etiology) for the history of the relic of the lock of hair in Qanqal. John's travel to Emesa (and there and back again) is thus a structural feature of Īshō'dnah's work but also represents the very thing that Īshō'dnah is doing in collecting stories. Both John of Qanqal and Īshō'dnah have created an archive.

Another story of interest is the story of John of Kashkar (*LC* 10), which I quote here in full:

> John's family was of the locale of Kashkar. After he was trained (*ethdarash*) in the study of books, he went to the monastery that was in the locale of Kashkar. (This is the one which, later, holy Mar Gani restored, a disciple of Mar Abraham the Great, and it is called by his name up to today.)[15] And John served there in the sanctuary; and while he was there he was sacristan. On Easter Sunday he was carried off (*ethhteph*) to the desert of Scetis (*'esqetīs*) with another penitent/ascetic. John went to the assembly of the anchorites of Bēth Onesimos and he was blessed by them. The leader of the holy men commanded that he go to serve before the altar of the Lord in the monastery of 'Aīn Deqlā, and on that very day he was carried off (*ethhteph*) and he came to the monastery of Bēth Garmai.[16] When he served for a time, he died in deep/profound old age and he

[14] The head of John the Baptist was indeed Emesa's famous relic, having been discovered in 452. This relic was the subject of, among other studies, an important comparativist-anthropological article by classicist Jane Harrison (1916), which famously attracted the public scorn of the scholar of Christian apocrypha and Provost of King's College Cambridge, M.R. James (1917); Harrison responded gracefully (1917).

[15] See *LC* 14.

[16] On 'Aīn Deqlā, see Christelle JULLIEN 2009, 174–175.

was deposed in the sanctuary where he served on the 24th of Ab, and his memorial is performed on the first of Teshrin.

In this passage a number of standard elements of the *Liber Castitatis* appear: a training in books before taking the habit (this is mentioned again and again); a line of discipleship, especially the naming of Abraham the Great; a mention of the saint's profound old age (*saibuthā 'amīqthā*), which is a favorite phrase of Īshō'dnah; the burial of the saint's body in the sanctuary where he served (here it is not made explicit that he is the builder); and, finally, a commemoration date (this is only given for about a third of Īshō'dnah's entries).

However, in the middle of this otherwise standard entry, we have a magical teleportation scene to Scetis in Egypt. There, the gathered anchorites welcome John and his unnamed companion with a blessing. Strangely, the leader gives John a commission to the monastery of 'Aīn Deqlā, and immediately John is once again teleported back to East Syriac territory, to Bēth Garmai, presumably to found the said monastery of 'Aīn Deqlā there. However, this is not explicitly stated. Nor is this where he started from. Kashkar, his home, is further to the south, in Bēth Aramaye. Bēth Garmai is to the north of Kashkar, along the Tigris. We are beginning to see that the mobility between East Syriac monasteries was very fluid (or was thought to be very fluid at this time), and almost every story revolves around the leaving of one place for another. In other words, the author assumes a knowledge of local geography even as he uses it for structuring his work. This story, however, while clearly rooted among Christian monastic networks in Persia, is made more exotic, and potentially more authoritative, through John's miraculous journey to the West, to Egypt. In fact, this is the only example in the *Liber Castitatis* of an East Syriac monk being directly commissioned by the desert monks in Egypt and returning to the East. Is this meant to be the lens through which we read other visits to Scetis in the *Liber Castitatis*?

By way of comparison, we might note the two monks he is associated with in terms of lineage: Mar Abraham the Great of Kashkar and his disciple Mar Gani. Both of these saints receive their own biographies in the *Liber Castitatis* (14 and 28, respectively), and are otherwise well known. Like John of Qanqal and John of Kashkar, both Abraham and Gani travel to the West. In fact, they both travel explicitly to three of the most important centers of Christian monasticism within the late Roman Empire: Jerusalem, Scetis, and Mt. Sinai. These journeys are merely mentioned in the text. No descriptions of their activities there are recorded.

For Abraham, after his sojourn in the West, he predictably does not return to Bēth Aramaye but goes north to the School of Nisibis — the home of East Syriac higher education (and it is underlined here that he is in the direct line of Mar Narsai, the founder of the School). This trajectory leads him to found the Great Monastery on nearby Mt. Izla, which was already famous because the legendary

Mar Awgen, an Egyptian monk with whom Īshōʻdnah begins his collection, had gone there and founded what was considered to be the first East Syriac monastery.[17] Abraham's Great Monastery produced numerous famous saints and monks, who are briefly catalogued in Īshōʻdnah's entry for Abraham (14); all of them get their own biographies elsewhere in the *Liber Castitatis*.[18]

Mar Gani's journey to the West seems to have been made in honor of Mar Abraham upon his death. Being a disciple of Abraham, he was resident at Mt. Izla before heading west. He leaves immediately after Mar Abraham dies. Upon his return he does not go back to Nisibis or Mt. Izla but to Kashkar in Bēth Aramaye, which is in fact also Gani's hometown. Abraham did not follow this trajectory of returning home. But Īshōʻdnah claims Gani was rich and had distributed his wealth to the poor of Kashkar before heading to Mt. Izla to find Abraham, so perhaps he had a vested interest there that other monks from Kashkar did not have. Nevertheless, the reader begins to understand that there are various patterns of movement both within and outside of Persia, and that the monk does not necessarily return to the place where he started from and, even more, may visit multiple sites in between. He may also study at the schools and/or receive the habit either before or after his travels. He may even found a monastery or become a bishop before setting out. In other words, there is an insistent fluidity in the *Liber Castitatis* that is impossible to miss, and no regulatory pattern is applied beyond the natural episodic structure of the stories.

Gabriel of Kashkar (121) founded multiple monasteries.[19] He built the first one in his village in Bēth Aramaye and collected some brothers there. Then he immediately left for Jerusalem. He took the habit, not in his home region or on Mt. Izla, but in a Palestinian monastery on the coast of "Çaidin" (Sidon?), which is said to have been founded by another (anonymous) from Kashkar. After devoting himself to asceticism there, he returned to Kashkar and built two more monasteries, "the monastery of Karsa" and "the monastery of Gabbare." Then he built the monastery in Mosul that bears his name. He died in even one further monastery in Bēth Garmai near Mahoze. When Mahoze and the monastery were destroyed 59 years after his death, the brothers of the monastery of Karsa took his body and buried it in their own monastery — showing that, even after death, the monastic founders still move around!

Probably the most dramatic of all visits to the West in the *Liber Castitatis* is that of the aforementioned Sāhdōnā or "Martyrius" (127), who was ordained priest in Bēth Garmai by the future katholikos Īshōʻyahb III (649–659). Accord-

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17 As already noted, on the relationship between Mar Awgen and Mar Abraham of Kashkar, see Florence JULLIEN 2008.

18 The history of the School of Nisibis has been admirably told elsewhere: VÖÖBUS 1965 and BECKER 2006b; 2008.

19 The title of the entry says 3 but I count 4 in the narrative.

ing to Īshō‘dnah's narrative, Sāhdōnā was excommunicated by the katholikos Mar Ameh (kath. 646–649) because of his religious views, despite the encouragements and friendship of Īshō‘yahb, who would be the next katholikos. After having retreated to the mountains to consider his views, Sāhdōnā comes down and repents to a Mar Sabrīshō‘ (not Sabrīshō‘ I, who was dead by this time), though Īshō‘dnah claims he kept the same beliefs. At this point he launches off to the Holy Land to find the emperor Heraclius, who was then at Jerusalem, and he says to him: "I am being persecuted by the eastern bishops because I profess the true faith." (This is, of course, completely out of chronological order, as we learned from Thomas of Marga.)

After his profession and his condemnation of the saints partial to Diodore (*qadishe d-bēth Dyādoros*), the emperor commissions him directly to be the bishop of Edessa. So he heads north to Edessa. However, after a time as bishop of Edessa, some informers come to Heraclius claiming that he was still professing "the doctrines of Diodore" (*haimānouthe d-bēth Dyādoros*). The emperor then issues a direct order to remove him from Edessa. He then returns to the East, and repents to Mar Ameh who receives him with mercy and sends him back to be the bishop in Bēth Garmai, where he was originally ordained. However, the same Īshō‘yahb III, who had previously ordained him priest and then encouraged him to repent of his views wrote a letter to Mar Ameh saying, "Surely it is Satan who has appointed (*'yatyeh*) Sāhdōnā from the party of the Romans (*men bēth rhomāye*) and has openly placed him in front of you, since he has with him two books which he composed against our belief and confession." Upon receiving the letter the church immediately excommunicates Sāhdōnā. Like after his first excommunication, Sāhdōnā stays put, "with cries and groans." Eventually, he leaves the East once again and returns to Edessa to inhabit a cave. Īshō‘dnah claims that he heard that Sāhdōnā eventually rejected his heretical opinions and converted to the truth, after which he died and was buried in his cave. Not content to leave it at that, however, Īshō‘dnah ends the life by quoting from a work of Gabriel of Bēth 'Abē that after Sāhdōnā was excommunicated the second time, Gabriel (surnamed "the Cow" in Thomas of Marga), inflamed with passion, went to find him at Edessa and disputed with him and confounded him in his own cave.

Much has been written about Sāhdōnā which takes into account the other sources for his life and doctrines: namely, Thomas of Marga, the letters of Īshō‘yahb III, and Sāhdōnā's surviving works themselves.[20] Fiey regards Īshō‘dnah's version of events as highly confused and inferior to these other historical sources, a position that I would agree with.[21] However, this does not

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[20] His works are edited and translated in DE HALLEUX 1960–1965 (see also the earlier edition of BEDJAN 1902); see also DE HALLEUX 1957 and BROCK in *GEDSH* 2012 s.v. "Sahdona (Martyrius)".

[21] FIEY 1966, 442.

affect the centrality of Sāhdōnā's geographical displacements. One might notice his easy movement between Jerusalem and Edessa (mimicking Heraclius' own?), as well as back and forth between Roman and Sasanian territory (involuntarily, for the most part). It is certainly a concern to Īshōʿdnah that these movements resonate with Sāhdōnā's theological tendencies. Can Sāhdōnā, having gone back and forth to the West multiple times, be trusted once he renounces his past and settles in the East? Evidently not! Once he retires (homeless and churchless) to the cave near Edessa, even then, the long arm of East Syriac monasticism reaches him and proves, on his own turf, that he is false. Thus Edessa, like Scetis and Sinai for the monks above, is a structural locus in Sāhdōnā's biography. These notices of travel can be said to be at the core of how each biography is conceived and organized.

Īshōʿdnah's catalogue of East Syriac founders goes on and on. But that is precisely the point of the genre. Episodic narratives are combined in a single book, one which could be extended ad infinitum. Fiey compares the *Liber Castitatis* to an apothecary's shop, with similar bottles of various potions all lined up neatly on the shelf. This is the very nature of lists. I would argue that this list has a particular logic, one which is largely geographical. First, the *Liber Castitatis* is highly localized — the reader is expected to understand that moving from Bēth Aramaye to Bēth Garmai is a move to the north. But second, one is equally expected to be impressed by visits to the Holy Land and Egypt, well outside the localized territory of East Syriac Christians. This seems to be a paradox. But is this a correct assessment of the text? Is the reader truly expected to be impressed by such visits? I might suggest not. While the physical distance between Kashkar and Mt. Sinai is not insignificant, in the mental world of the *Liber Castitatis*, the imaginary distance between these two hubs could be as short as a simple teleportation there and back in the same day. Moreover, in the *Liber Castitatis* it is clearly the case that spending a long stretch of time in the Holy Land is not to be condemned. This runs counter to what seems to have been the prevailing opinion in East Syriac canon law: rules from the *Synodicon Orientale* and Barhebraeus' *Nomocanon* explicitly prohibit itinerancy among the monks: the theological pitfalls of traveling to the West are even mentioned. Īshōʿdnah, by stark contrast, notes that George of Merv gained great spiritual benefit by visiting the Holy Land (36).

Īshōʿdnah's *Liber Castitatis*, falling as it does between history and hagiography, differs from Thomas of Marga's *Historia Monastica* in important ways while nevertheless trading on similar literary assumptions. The *Liber Castitatis* is a catalogue of stories, a *kunāšā d-tasʿyātā*. The *Historia Monastica* also uses *tasʿyātā* ("stories"/ "histories") to describe its own genre, but the *Liber Castitatis* is a different kind of text, with different organization, assumptions, and major themes. It is a summary view (*b-pāsiqātā*),[22] as he claims in the preface, of

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[22] BEDJAN (ed.) 1901, 438 ln.2.

the foundations of East Syriac monasticism going back to all the way to Awgen of Egypt (completely left out of Thomas' history) and continuing up to his own day. As a catalogue or pandect (*kunāšā*), it is an archive of a wide variety of experiences and narratives. We know similar texts were written around the same time: 'Ananīshō''s revision of Dadīshō's translation of the *Lausiac History* — the *Paradise of the Fathers* — into question-answer format has the same epitomated aesthetic, and similar *erōtapokriseis* were being written by Greek authors at the same time. Likewise, one suspects the lost *Paradise of the Fathers* by David of the Kurdish Tribes was of a similar bite-size, compilatory structure. Importantly, both Ananisho' and David are mentioned by Thomas as important predecessors of his own endeavor, even though he is self-consciously writing in a different genre altogether.

IV. Historiography as Hagiography in the East

I would like to connect this literary analysis of Thomas of Marga and Īshō'dnah of Basra with earlier Syriac literature that deals with pilgrimage, either to the Holy Land or elsewhere. By the 860s Īshō'dnah is, in many ways, the culmination of that literature, though (as I mentioned) he boldly writes in opposition to the apparently prevailing canon law of his day regarding monastic travel, which was reiterated by Barhebraeus in the 13th century.[23]

In 2010, Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony published a wide-ranging article about the "transformative aspect" of travel for Syriac hagiography, entitled "From Sacred Travel to Monastic Career." She concentrates for the most part on fifth and sixth century texts such as the *Life of Rabbula* (in which he is baptized in the Jordan), the *Life of Ephrem* (in which he travels to both Egypt and Cappadocia),[24] and the popular Syriac translation of Palladius' *Lausiac History*. These texts, she says, provided for the transformation of the earliest tourism to the Holy Land, as in the Bordeaux Pilgrim or Egeria, into something more fundamental for late antique hagiography. She discusses eastern precursors to Īshō'dnah, such as the *Life of Raban Hormizd* (in which he *refuses* to go on pilgrimage),[25] and the *Life of Mar Benjamin of Nahardea* (in which he visits the head of John the Baptist in Emesa, then moves on to Jerusalem, Scetis, and Sinai).[26] In summary, her view of the saint's Life is that it "functions as a way to control and perform the sacred,"[27] and that, within that system of power and performance, travel to the Holy Land and Scetis became "an integral part of the

23 Herman Teule has contested the idea that monastic travel/pilgrimage was universally denigrated in earlier East Syriac tradition. See TEULE 1994.

24 AMAR (ed. & tr.) 2011

25 BITTON-ASHKELONY 2010, 362.

26 BITTON-ASHKELONY 2010. For the West, she summarizes some of the *Life of Theodota of Amid* but does not have access to the text.

27 BITTON-ASHKELONY 2010, 363.

Syriac ascetic discourse."[28] Further, "Pilgrimage was not merely a religious fashion or literary *topos* but the *sine qua non* in shaping sainthood and authority."[29]

From the point of view of my analysis above, I would hesitate to make a cultural argument about sainthood at the expense of pushing the literary or structural angle to the background. The role of geography in the formation of Syriac genres has, I would argue, more to do with the assumptions of author and audience about the shape of narrative and the tradition of writing as they are revealed in the text itself. Insisting that such assumptions are bound to "sainthood" and "authority" is problematic, because it trades on contested definitions and does not necessarily elucidate how travel and geography are used by individual authors or traditions.

By contrast, in an article from the same year, Muriel Debié attempted to clarify the distinction between Syriac hagiography and historiography, only to conclude in the end that the two genres were intertwined among East Syriac writers in a way not seen in other eastern Christian traditions. She writes in conclusion:

> In the case of hagiography, therefore, the truthfulness of the information provided is underpinned by the reference to direct oral testimony and the identification of a chain of sound transmitters. This is far less important for historians, even when they are unable to find documentary evidence for contemporary events and so are forced to rely upon private sources of oral information. The mixed nature of East Syrian histories is all the more obvious, since their writing methodology borrows from both traditions.[30]

To support this thesis Debié points to the enormous number of East Syriac saints' Lives that we know are lost to us today. Such lives are mentioned either in ʿAbdīshōʿ's catalogue or cited by other authors in their narratives. In the course of his lengthy preface to the *Life of George of Izla*, Babai the Great mentions several saints' Lives he himself wrote that are now lost.[31] Thomas of Marga lists full corpora of several different hagiographical authors for whom *no* texts have survived, such as Sabrīshōʿ Rostam, as well as lost works of partially surviving writers, as in the case of Sāhdōnā.[32] The biographical focus thus comes to the fore in both historiography, where autopsy or chronology might otherwise be emphasized,[33] and strict hagiography where the life and deeds of

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28 BITTON-ASHKELONY 2010, 370. She says elsewhere, "Such travels had become an essential component of this literature and the ascetic culture" (360).

29 Ibid., 365. Italics hers.

30 DEBIÉ 2010, 70–71.

31 WALKER 2010, 36–37.

32 DEBIÉ 2010, 66. BUDGE (ed. & tr.) 1893 1.89–90/2.209–210 (Sabrīshōʿ); 1.62/2.110–112 (Sāhdōnā).

33 On Thomas of Marga's commitment to both autopsy and chronology, see DEBIÉ 2010, 64–66. Thomas even goes so far as to authenticate histories by comparing the handwriting of auto-

the saint are preeminent. The difference can be aptly illustrated by Thomas of Marga's entry on Sāhdōnā. After cataloging his works, he notes also that Sāhdōnā wrote the funeral oration for his master Raban Jacob, concluding,

> ...every one who reads it will perceive the high character of his intellect, and the power of his language, and he will find that he was a mighty man among those who compose books. He did not continue to write to the end, for he went out of his mind; but how his understanding was destroyed I will relate afterwards in the place where his history requires it to be written.[34]

Īshō'dnah himself mentions occasionally that certain founders were also monastic authors, but, importantly, he does not sever this information from the enclosed biography of the saint or founder he is discussing. There are no cross-references, as in Thomas, only the occasional grouping of founders who shared an ascetic master (namely, under Mar Awgen and Mar Abraham the Great). But, even while attesting to a network of schools, this is not a history of a specific school or even a group of schools.[35]

V. Conclusion

Importantly, the geographical framework for both ninth-century historians I have discussed, Thomas of Marga and Īshō'dnah of Basra, is oriented towards the West. Other than passing references, they have preserved very little information about the Church of the East in Central Asia and China, and whatever they preserve, it certainly does not have a structural role in their histories. One obvious objection to this analysis could be, "Thomas and Īshō'dnah did not have any sources about what was going on in the East, so they obviously could not write about it." This objection, while natural, does not hold. Thomas of Marga, in particular, was an accomplished writer and historian who had access to numerous texts, which he cites by name (and most of which are no longer available to us, including such key sources as the patriarchal archive). Likewise, Īshō'dnah, though considered today to be less historically reliable, is nevertheless comprehensive chronologically in a way that Thomas of Marga is not. Thomas is aware of chronological order and from time to time will mention that he is relating history out of its proper place, but he makes no pretensions to providing a complete history of East Syrian monasticism. I think it would be reasonable to assume they had more knowledge about what was going on in the Church in Central Asia and China than they express in their histories. There is no way to prove such an assertion, except that both are aware of a broader Church of the East but simply chose not to write about it.

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graphs, e.g. of Abba 'Ananīshō' in library of the Great Monastery at Izla. See BUDGE (ed. & tr.) 1893, 1.78/2.174–175.

[34] BUDGE (ed. & tr.) 1893, 1.62/2.112.

[35] Cf. DEBIÉ 2010, 64.

This is not to suggest these historians had any political reason for withholding such information, but only that the organization of their narratives, and the historiographical arguments they made within them, defined the Church of East with relation to the West. To be clear, I do not mean simply the Romano-Byzantine, Chalcedonian empire, though that is one part of it. I mean, more specifically, the historical geography of Greco-Syriac-Coptic monasticism, which East Syrian historians had inherited as part of the shared imaginative world of eastern Christianity. In particular, their commitment to combining the art of ecclesiastical history with a history of monastic foundations and, especially in Thomas's case, the history of strife and dissension within those monasteries, required meditation on the link between the monasticism of Iraq and that of *their* "West" (which, of course, for western medievalists, is still very much "the East" in the period).

It is for this reason I find it helpful to try to apply Michelle P. Brown's investigation into the imagined "Eastwardness of Things" to the real-world eastern context of the Church of the East. In some ways it shows that both western and eastern Christianity understood their property of locatedness in the world as being in relation to Jerusalem and Egypt. Again, it is clear that the Byzantine Empire was a part of this locatedness, but for the East Syrian writers in the ninth century, after two centuries of Muslim rule (despite the fact that one can not discern hardly anything about the Islamic world from Thomas of Marga's *Historia Monastica*!) the Byzantine Empire did not define the Christian church anymore.[36]

That said, it is a remarkable fact that the acknowledgment of divisions between the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox and Melkite churches is less pronounced in these writers than in other Syriac writers of the period (perhaps those working closer to the true West?). The attempted union with Heraclius at Aleppo is couched by Thomas very much in the context of late Sasanian relations with the Romans, and at a time when the Romans presumably had the upper-hand. It is even the case that the East Syrian patriarch Īshō'yahb III sent money to the Chalcedonian church of the Anastasis for repairs.[37] And it was clearly the case that East Syriac texts were circulating in the Chalcedonian monasteries of Mar Sabas and St. Catherine's.[38]

Both the freedom of movement of these East Syrian monks *and* their seeming disregard for denominational divisions are striking elements of histories that focus on very troubled times among eastern Christians, i.e. the early seventh century. Is this a historiographical fiction of the ninth-century historians? Or

36 Not that it had ever defined the Church of the East dogmatically, of course, but I am speaking here in terms of orientation.

37 BROCK 2001, 202.

38 BROCK 2001; 2003; 2004.

does this accurately reflect the situation on the ground in the early seventh century? We might be suspect of this picture given the absence of any comparative historiography on what was going on towards the East. In the ninth century, somewhat surprisingly, the main geographical determinant for East Syrian Christians in Iraq was, in fact, the West.

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Byzantine-Rite Christians (Melkites) in Central Asia and China and Their Contacts with the Church of the East

Ken PARRY
Mcquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Introduction

The intention of this paper is to examine the evidence for the presence of Byzantine-rite Christians, or Melkites as they became known, in Central Asia and China.[1] We need first of all to identify who these Christians were and then to discuss how they came to settle in Central Asia and China. Unfortunately the answer to both these questions is not that straightforward, given the sources that reference them are somewhat dispersed and that there is meager evidence thus far from archaeology. It does not appear that Melkites can be identified by anything resembling this name in the Chinese sources, so we are largely reliant on Greek, Syriac, and Arabic documents for information about them. However, that being said there is sufficient material to make some headway in establishing certain facts concerning them and their relations with the Church of the East.

The title Melkite derives from the Syriac '*malkā*' (Arabic '*malik*'), meaning 'king', and by extension 'royalist' or 'imperialist',[2] and was first applied by anti-Chalcedonians in Syria and Egypt to those Christians who remained loyal to Chalcedon and the Chalcedonian patriarchs of the oriental sees of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem. The term may have been used as early as the fifth century, but it is likely to have become more common as a result of the establishment of separate anti-Chalcedonian hierarchies in Syria and Egypt in the sixth century. As a result of the Arab conquests of the Eastern Mediterranean in the mid seventh century, it was applied in the early Islamic caliphate to distinguish Melkites from the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites),[3] and the Church of the East (Nestorians).[4] An early witness to the use of the term in Syriac is found in a letter of the Catholicos Timothy 1 (r. 780-823) dated 799, in which he refers to patriarch Job of Antioch (d. 843) as 'the patriarch of the Melkites'.[5] Since

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1 See my earlier contribution, PARRY 2012.
2 For a 17th century definition that takes issue with this interpretation, see TREIGER, 2014.
3 For the term Jacobite, see SELEZNYOV 2013.
4 For the term Nestorian, see BROCK 1996.
5 BROCK 1999. Regarding the Melkite identity in the early Islamic period, see MONFERRER-SALA 2012; GRIFFTH 2006; LEEMING 2003.

1729 however the term has been used exclusively for the Greek Catholic Church of the Middle East.

There are three identifiable periods in which we can find evidence for Chalcedonian Christians beyond the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire. The first is during the Sasanian period in Persia, the second is during the Abbasid caliphate in Central Asia, and the third is during the Yuan dynasty in China. The Melkites did not belong to a national church in the sense that the anti-Chalcedonian Coptic, Syrian and Armenian churches became national churches. The heads of these Oriental Orthodox churches became in effect ethnarchs, but the Melkite church formed a trans-national community whose history and settlement was due largely to deportation and colonization. This was how Melkite communities became established under the Sasanians in Persia,[6] under the Arabs in Central Asia, and under the Mongols in China. Like the Church of the East the Melkite Christian communities appear to have been diverse both from an ethnic and linguistic point of view.

Melkites in Persia and Central Asia

The sixth-century Byzantine historian Procopius describes what happened to the Christian population of Antioch after it was captured by Khusro I (r. 531-579) in 540:

> Now Chosroes built a city in Assyria in a place one day's journey distant from the city of Ctesiphon, and he named it the Antioch of Chosroes and settled there all the captives from Antioch, constructing for them a bath and a hippodrome and providing that they should have free enjoyment of their other luxuries besides. Indeed he brought with him charioteers and musicians both from Antioch and from the other Roman cities. Besides this, he always provisioned these citizens of Antioch at public expense more carefully than in the fashion of captives, and he required that they be called king's subjects …[7]

The city was also known as *Rumaghan* or 'city of the Romans' as well as Better Antioch. It seems to have had a resident catholicos, and according to the Syrian Orthodox historian John of Ephesus (507-586), a population of around 30,000 (*trigintamilia*) by the late sixth century.[8] Among the deportees from Antioch to Persia at this time a large proportion would have been Chalcedonians otherwise known as Melkites.[9]

6 MORONY 2004.
7 PROCOPIUS, *The Wars*, 2.9.14; 14.1-4.
8 BROOKS 1936, ch. 6.19.
9 See the excellent overview by JULLIEN 2006.

Another Byzantine historian of the sixth century, Meander the Guardsman, gives details of the peace treaty between Khosro I and Justinian I (r. 527-565) in 562 that touches on the treatment of Christians under the Sasanians:

> It was agreed that they [the Christians] could build churches and worship freely and without hindrance sing their hymns of praise, as is our custom. Furthermore, they would not be compelled to take part in Zoroastrian worship nor against their will to pray to the gods that the Zoroastrians believe in. For their part, the Christians would not venture to convert the Zoroastrians to their worship. It was also agreed that the Christians would be permitted to bury their dead in graves, as is our custom.[10]

After the capture of Seleucia-Ctesiphon by the Arabs in 637 the town of Better Antioch continued to be known in Arabic as 'city of the Romans' (*al-Rūmiyya*).[11] The town was abandoned in the mid-eighth century with the construction of the new Abbāsid capital of Baghdad, and in 762 the Arab caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 754-75) transferred the entire community to the province of Chach in Transoxania together with its catholicos, who was addressed thereafter as the 'Catholicos of Romagyris',[12] but who by the end of the tenth century had changed his title to 'Catholicos of Khorasan'. The Greek title 'Romagyris' may derive from the Middle Persian '*Rumagird*' meaning 'town or colony of Romans'.

The Arab conquest of Central Asia was completed as a result of the Arab defeat of a Chinese army at the Battle of Talas in 751. The relocation of Christians by al-Manṣūr to the province of Chach in 762 would have placed them at the outer edges of the Abbāsid caliphate. The province of Chach was located on the eastern bank of the Syr Darya, and the city known today as Tashkent, meaning 'city of stone', retains a dissimilated form of the name Chach.[13] Recent excavations at Qarshovul-tepe south west of Tashkent have unearthed evidence of a possible Christian settlement.[14] The title 'Romagyris' is mentioned by the eleventh-century Greek patriarch of Antioch, Peter III (r.1028-51), along with that of Irenoupolis, the see of a second catholicos.[15] The title 'Irenoupolis' is the Greek equivalent of the Arabic epithet 'city of peace' for Baghdad. The emergence of two catholicoi seems to have arisen because of an increase in the settlement of Melkites in Baghdad resulting in a dispute over whether Baghdad or Chach was entitled to claim the catholicos. Those at Chach argued they had the right to him

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10 BROCKLEY 1984, 75-76; DIGNAS-WINTER 2007, 225.

11 PARRY 2012, 97.

12 See NASRALLAH 1987, 7-10; KLEIN 1999.

13 On Chach as a Sogdian region, see LIVSHITS 2007.

14 See SAVCHENKO-SHEYKO 2010-2012.

15 CHARON (Korolevsky) 2000, 265-266. In 1958-59 the Greek patriarch of Alexandria established the diocese of Irenoupolis (Dar-es-Salaam) with jurisdiction over Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, see PARRY 1999, 9.

because he had gone with them to Central Asia, whereas those in Baghdad claimed him because formerly he resided at Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[16]

In the early tenth century the catholicos of the Church of the East, Abraham III (r. 905-936) objected to the Melkites using the title of catholicos because of their alleged disloyalty to the caliphate. Although living within the territory of Islam (*dar al-islam*), and under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the patriarch of Antioch, the Melkites were by their very name open to accusations of serving two masters. The Church of the East on the other hand had declared its independence under the Sasanians by 424,[17] although both groups were subject to minority status. The consecration of the Melkite catholicos for Baghdad was disrupted by members of the Church of the East, which led the Abbāsid authorities to impose a fine on the Melkite metropolitan, obliging him to sign in 912 a pledge preventing the Melkite community from having a catholicos at Baghdad.[18]

In the Arabic *Vita* of the tenth-century Melkite patriarch of Antioch, Christophoros (r. 960–967) an account is given of the transportation by al-Manṣūr of the Christian community to Chach:

> When the Muslims constructed the 'City of Peace' (Madīnat as-Salām), that is Baghdad, they decided to move the Christian community. They were transported to a far off land in Persia called Chach and their catholicos was exiled with them. These émigrés were known as the 'colony of Romans' which was a suitable name for them.[19]

Patriarch Christophoros who was a native of Baghdad enjoyed the support of the emir Sayf al-Dawla (r. 945-67) and appointed Melkite Catholicoi for Baghdad and Romagyris. He was assassinated in the wake of the overthrow of Sayf al-Dawla just two years before the Byzantine army under the emperor Nikephoros Phokas (r. 963-69) captured Antioch.[20]

In the mid twelfth century a deacon of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, Nilos Doxapatrios, composed the Τάξις τῶν πατριαρχικῶν θρόνων (*Notitia thronorum patriarchalium*) in which he tells us that the patriarch of Antioch:

> … had under his jurisdiction all of Asia and the East, including India, and even now he dispatches, after arranging it, a Catholicos with the title of Romagyris; in Persia also, which comprises Babylonia, now called Baghdad, the patriarch

16 ZAYAT 1952, 23-25.
17 BAUM-WINKLER 2003, 19-21.
18 FIEY 1977, esp. 387-389; WILMSHURST 2011, 193.
19 ZAYAT 1952, 33-36.
20 TALBOT and SULLIVAN 2005, 149-150.

> sends a Catholicos with the title of Catholicos of Irenoupolis.[21]

The inclusion of India by Doxapatrios cannot be collaborated because there is no evidence for Melkites in India at this time. There may be evidence for Greek-rite Christians on the island of Socotra in the India Ocean by the sixth century, if a notice by Cosmas Indicopleustes is to be believed.[22] However, the mention of a Catholicos of Romagyris and a Catholics of Irenoupolis in the twelfth century is confirmation of two catholicoi, although there is a lacuna in the record from this point through to 1364 when the title Romagyris is said to have become attached to that of the Catholicos of Georgia.[23] If this was so, then it is evidence that it was a Melkite catholicate as the Georgians were part of the Byzantine Orthodox world and would not otherwise have taken the titular.

An important witness to what was happening in Central Asia in the late tenth century is al-Bīrūnī (973-1048), who writes about the liturgical calendars of the Melkites and the Church of the East communities in his native Chorasmia.[24] His Melkite calendar begins in October, not September as with the Byzantine calendar, which implies that the Melkites in Central Asia, like the Church of the East but unlike the Melkites in the Middle East, based their liturgical year on the Seleucid Era.[25] He states that the catholicos of the Melkites in Muslim countries resided in Baghdad and that he was appointed by the patriarch of Antioch, whereas the Nestorian catholicos was appointed on the recommendation of the Nestorian community. Furthermore, he says that the title patriarch existed only among the Melkites and not among the Nestorians, and states that the Melkites had four patriarchates, Constantinople, Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, but interestingly he does not mention the patriarchate of Jerusalem. He also mentions that there was a Melkite metropolitan of Merv, as well as informing us that the Melkites knew of six ecumenical councils, a situation which is known to have been the case with Melkites in the Middle East.[26]

Writing in the early ninth century the Melkite bishop of Harrān in northern Syria, Theodore Abū Qurrah (c.750-c.828), discusses only six ecumenical councils and makes the curious observation that all these councils were called at the command of the bishop of Rome.[27] His promotion of the see of Rome may be due to the fact that at the time of writing the emperors and patriarchs of Constantinople had become iconoclasts.[28] However, at the same time he also lists

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21 PARTHEY 1967, 271.
22 McCRINGLE 1897, 119.
23 RICHARD 2004, 578.
24 SACHAU 1879, chaps. 15-17.
25 SACHUA 283.
26 SACHUA 284, 291; GRIFFTH, 2003.
27 LAMOREAUX 2005, 68-73. On Theodore Abū Qurrah, see LAMOREAUX 2001.
28 At the same time the Byzantine iconophile and monastic reformer Theodore the Stoudite was also appealing to the bishop of Rome, FATOUROS 1991, I. 34, 33; II. 407.

the emperors who convened the councils, as well as discussing the role of the emperors in the following way:

> The emperor himself had competence neither to reflect on matters of religion nor to confirm the council's decision in any way; all he did was serve the fathers, listening to them and obeying them, receiving all that they decided in matters of religion, without in any way participating in their reflections.[29]

Clearly Theodore wished to play down imperial involvement in the decision-making processes of the ecumenical councils and does so largely in response to objections by other Christian groups that the Melkites were disloyal imperialists. The precedent set by Constantine the Great in convoking the first ecumenical council at Nicaea proved to be both a blessing and a curse for the church. This is commented on in the first half of the eighth century by the Melkite theologian, John of Damascus (c.675-c.750), who lists those emperors responsible for causing the church to promote heretical doctrines.[30] Generally it was the church's policy to ignore the role of the emperors in leading the church astray and not to implicate the ruling dynasties in the sins of their forefathers; blame was usually laid at the feet of the bishops. Theodore Abū Qurrah's revisionist interpretation concerning imperial interference in the councils is understandable in the context of his time and situation.

One reason Theodore does not mention the seventh council is that it was not until the time of the patriarch Photios (r. 858-867 & 877-886) in the second half of the ninth century that the council of 787 was ratified by the Byzantine Church. In Constantinople the iconoclast controversy did not end officially until 843 when the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was inaugurated.[31] In his *Encyclical Letter to the Eastern Patriarchs* of 866, Photios informs them that it has come to his notice that some churches under their jurisdiction count only six councils when in fact they should count seven to include the one of 787.[32] It should be said that the ecumenical status of this council was called in question because the legates who represented the oriental patriarchs came from the émigré communities in Constantinople.[33] However, as Sidney Griffith has pointed out, the creedal practice of confirming the teachings of the 'six councils' lasted down to modern times, and among the Melkite collections of canons in Arabic from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, only one third of twenty-one

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29 LAMOREAUX 2005, 75. For the development of the Byzantine concept of ecumenical councils, see McGUCKIN 2012, ch. 8.

30 KOTTER (ed), *Contra imaginum calumniators orations tres*, II.16, 1975, 114. On Maximus the Confessor's *Kaiserkritik* in the seventh century, see BOOTH 2014, 222-23, 310-14.

31 On Byzantine iconoclasm and the Melkites, see PARRY 2003. For an important reassessment of this topic, see CODOÑER 2013

32 PELIKAN-HOTCHKISS 2003, 307.

33 PARRY 1996, 133-134. Theodore the Stoudite uses the term 'ecumenical' with reference to Nicaea II in his correspondence, see FATOUROS 1991, II. 475.

manuscripts mention the seventh council.[34] It would appear that Photios' encyclical fell on deaf ears.

We have seen, however, that the promotion of only six councils was due in part to the Melkites sense of isolation under the caliphate and their desire to combat accusations of disloyalty by their co-religionists. In response to this type of accusation Theodore Abū Qurrah has this to say:

> Heretic, suppose you say that the council you detest was summoned by an emperor and thus must not be accepted. Does no one remember the first two councils and each of the other councils accepted by someone who professes Christianity today, namely, that each and every one of these was summoned by an emperor.[35]

It is apparent from this that in spite of the Church of the East accepting the first two councils and the Syrian Orthodox the first three, both communities made a point of attacking the Melkites for supporting an overtly imperialized church.[36] In the twelfth century the Syrian Orthodox bishop, Dionysius Bar Salibi (r. 1154-1171), in his polemic against the Melkites, condemns the Byzantines for translating ancient relics to Constantinople because the city lacked apostolic credentials, while extolling the primacy of the see of Antioch because the term 'Christian(s)' was first used there (Acts 11.25-26).[37]

It is not known what impact (if any) the Byzantine re-conquest of Antioch in 969 had on the Melkite communities in Central Asia. Although the Byzantines lost control of the city again to the crusaders in 1085, the patriarchate of Constantinople used the opportunity to reassert its authority in a number of areas, including liturgical reform.[38] However, the installation of a Latin patriarch of Antioch by the crusaders in 1100 saw the Greek patriarchs of Antioch residing in exile at Constantinople, although the Byzantines gave *de facto* recognition to this state of affairs. This situation prevailed until the second half of the thirteenth century when the Mameluks captured Antioch from the crusaders in 1268. The Byzantine reconquest of Antioch lasted little more than a century, but as we have noted above, it was in this period that the Greek patriarch of Antioch, Peter III, mentioned the two sees of Romagyris and Irenoupolis.[39]

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34 GRIFFTH 2006, 197.

35 LAMOREAUX 2005, 74.

36 For an overview of the Christian divisions, see MEYENDROFF 1989. We should bear in mind that the Syrian Orthodox canonized the Byzantine 'believing queen' Theodora, and that the Church of the East celebrated Constantine (and his mother Helena) on the Feast of the True Cross.

37 MINGANA 1935, 40-45, 49-50

38 CHEYNET 2006.

39 TODT 2004.

Could the Melkites of Central Asia have played a role in Byzantine diplomatic relations with China? I raise this question because of the number of embassies from *Da Qin* mentioned in the Tang dynastic sources and the lack of reference to such embassies in Byzantine documents.[40] The embassy by the Byzantine diplomat Zemarchos in 570 to the Turkic Khagan at Talas is the only documented embassy to Central Asia from the early Byzantine period.[41] It seems unlikely that the Melkites would have viewed themselves as representatives of Byzantine policy unless they were in direct contact with Constantinople. Their allegiance was to the patriarch of Antioch and lines of communication between the patriarch and his bishops in Central Asia would have been irregular. We know from the catholicos of the Church of the East, Timothy I (r. 780-823), how difficult it was for him residing in Baghdad to communicate with his far-flung dioceses in Central Asia and China.[42]

The evidence for a Melkite community in Chinese Central Asia is rather meager and not supported by discoveries made in the Turfan region. Most of our knowledge of Melkites in Central Asia comes from Sogdiana and Khorasan on the Western side of the Pamir Mountains. However, among the texts recovered from the monastery at Bulayïq, is a bilingual Psahn fragment in Greek and Sogdian and part of a letter in Syriac addressed to a Byzantine dignitary, which may indicate contact with Melkites.[43] Some Byzantine coins have also been found in tombs in the Turfan area,[44] but neither these nor the manuscript fragments can be taken to imply that there were Melkites settled in the oasis.

The Alans under the Mongols

The Alans were an alliance of Sarmartian tribes who settled in the Caucasus region in the early Christian period and who later split into East and West branches. They spoke an Iranian language from which modern Ossetic descends,[45] but apart from some inscriptions from the tenth or twelfth centuries written using the Greek script not much of their written legacy remains.[46] John Tzetzes (1110-1180), a twelfth-century Byzantine poet and scholar who claimed Georgian ancestry on his mother's side, preserves some Alanic sentences in the epilogue to his poem *Theogony*. The verses in question were designed to demonstrate his capacity to greet foreign residents of Constantinople in their

40 JIALING XU 2006. Michael Kordosis appears to take most references to *Da Qin* and *Fulin* in the Chinese sources as referring to Byzantium, KORDOSIS 2008, *passim*.

41 ROCKELY 1984, 117-125. On this embassy, see VAISSIÈRE 2005, 234-249.

42 DICKENS 2010.

43 SUNDERMAN 1994.

44 THIERRY and MORRISSON 1994; WANG 2004, 34.

45 Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union there has been a revival of the terms 'Alan' and 'Alania' among Ossetians and other ethnic groups in the Caucasus, as in the title given to the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania.

46 THORDARSON 2000.

native tongues, including Alans.[47] In 1992 a Greek Old Testament lectionary or Prophetologion was discovered in St. Petersburg containing thirty marginal notes written in Alanic.[48] According to the colophon the manuscript was copied in 1275 and at some point later, perhaps in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, a deacon located certain passages by marking them in an abbreviated form of Alanic.[49]

According to Rashīd al-Dīn (1247-1318) it was in 1239 that the Mongols captured the city of Magas, the capital of the Alans in the northern Caucasus region,[50] and transported Alan men with their families to become auxiliaries in the service of the Golden Horde and in China. The Alans, known to the Mongols and Chinese as Asu or As, were accepted as members of the ethnically diverse 'privileged peoples' (*semu ren*) according to the *Yuanshi*, where several names are found of Greek Christian origin, such as Elias and Nikolaos.[51] It was nothing new for the Alans to be auxiliaries because they had been employed as such in the Roman, Byzantine and Sasanian armies. In the West, where a group of Alans formed a federation with the Vandals, they are said to have become Christian, but it is unclear whether they joined the Arian church like the Vandals.[52] There is no firm evidence that the Alans of the Caucasus were Christian by the sixth century,[53] and nor is it clear that they were at the time of the exile and death of Maximos the Confessor (580-662) in Alania in 662, although the neighbouring Abasgians (Abkhazians) are referred to as being Christian.[54]

The king of the Alans in the Caucasus is said to have become Byzantine Orthodox between 905 and 915, along with the appointment of Peter as metropolitan of Alania,[55] but according to al-Masʿūdī (896-956) relations with Constantinople appeared to have ended in 932 when the Alans expelled the Byzantine clergy.[56] Nevertheless, the correct title by which to address the archon of Alania is given in the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* of Constantine VII Porphryogennetos (r. 912-959), where he is referred to as 'the mighty leader of Alania and our spiritual son' (τὸνἐξουσιαστὴν Ἀλανίας καὶ πνευματικὸν ἡμῶντέκον).[57] Among the early tenth-century correspondence of the patriarch of Constantinople, Nicholas I Mysticos (r. 901-907 & 912-925), there are several letters concerned with metropolitan Peter and the mission to Alania, written

47 KHAZDAN-EPSTEIN 1985, 259-260
48 ENGBERT-LUBOTSKY 2003.
49 IVANOV-LUBOTSKY 2011.
50 BOYLE 1971, 60-61.
51 ALEMANY 2000, 429-434; MOULE 1930, 261.
52 PROCOPIUS, *The Wars*, 2. 29.15; 3.24.3; BACHRACH 1973, 75-76.
53 ARZHANTSEVA 2002.
54 ALLEN-NEIL 2002, 135, 155.
55 ALEMANY 2000, 187, 239, 443
56 al-Masʿūdī is quoted by MINORSKY1958, 156.
57 MOFFAT-TALL 2012, 688.

between in 914 and 918.[58] We learn from these letters that Peter had a hard time converting the Alans from paganism and that he had quarreled with his fellow missionaries in Alania. The fact that the Alan king was Christian but his subjects were not, is confirmed by the contemporary Muslim writer ibn Rusta who reports that 'the Alan king is a Christian at heart, but all the people of his kingdom are heathens worshipping idols'.[59]

In 1226 during the Latin occupation of Constantinople we hear of a journey by the Byzantine bishop Theodore to the metropolitan see of Alania.[60] Theodore of Alania addressed a letter to the Synod-in-exile at Nicaea during the patriarchate of Germanos II (r. 1222-1240), in which he reports on the remote nature of Alan territory and its inhabitants. He finally reached his destination only to find a self-appointed bishop taking advantage of his congregation and he speaks scathingly of the Alans as being Christian in name only.[61] In spite of the failed mission to Alania by Peter at the beginning of the tenth century, a metropolitan of Alania can be traced in the Byzantine sources from the eleventh through to the fourteenth century.[62] Whether any of these metropolitans had contact with those Alans transported to China and conscripted into the Mongol armies is unknown.

In 1253 the Franciscan William of Rubruck (c.1220-c.1293) reports that he was visited by a group of Alans when he was travelling in the region of the River Don whom he describes as: 'Christians of the Greek rite who use the Greek alphabet and have Greek priests, and yet are not schismatic like the Greeks but honour every Christian without respect of persons.'[63]

The presence of such Byzantine-rite Christians in Central Asia is confirmed about fifty years later by the Armenian official Het'um who informs us that there were Christians called Sogdians (Soldains) in Chorasmia who had their own language, celebrated the liturgy like the Greeks, and who owed obedience to the patriarch of Antioch.[64] However, Rubruck informs us that further East at Karakorum the Alans and other Eastern Orthodox Christians were without priests, and that the Nestorians would not allow them to receive the sacraments unless they were first rebaptised by them.[65] Interestingly this stipulation does not appear to have been applied to Rubruck as a Latin-rite Christian because he

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58 *Epistles* 46, 51, 52, 118, 133-35, JENKINS-WESTERINK 1973.
59 ibn Rusta is quoted by ALEMANY 2000, 260.
60 On the appointment of metropolitans to Alania during the Mongol period, see PREISER-KAPELLER 2012.
61 THEODORE OF ALANIA; ALEMANY 2000, 236-239.
62 ALEMANY 2000, 240; SEIBT 2012.
63 JACKSON 1990, 102.
64 DAUVILLIER 1953, 67-68; BEDROSIAN (internet source).
65 JACKSON 1990, 213.

says that he was invited to concelebrate with them.[66] Marco Polo tells us that the Alans were Christians but he does not comment on their church affiliation.[67]

Rubruck discusses the question of the Alans and other Eastern Orthodox Christians drinking *kumis*, that is, fermented mare's milk, because they believed it was against their religion to do so, and if they did drink it, they were required by their priests to seek absolution, because they believed they had compromised their faith.[68] In addition the Alans raised the issue of being obliged to eat meat slaughtered according to ***halal*** requirements, which their priests regarded as meat sacrificed to idols.[69] At one point in order to curtail the power of Muslims in his government, Khubilai Khan (1215-1294) issued an indict prohibiting them from slaughtering animals according to Islamic law and imposed the death penalty on those who disobeyed.[70] However, this led to a decrease in Muslim merchants wanting to do business in China with a consequent decrease in revenues derived from such business and after seven years the edict was rescinded.[71]

The concern of the Alans over eating ***halal*** meat stemmed from the Eastern Orthodox interpretation of Paul's remarks about eating sacrificial meat as discussed in Acts 15:29 and I Cor. 8:10, 10:25, so naturally such matters were of concern given the high profile of Muslim officials under the Mongols. Theodore Balsamon (c.1130-c.1199), the twelfth-century Byzantine canon lawyer, in his commentary on canon 63 of the Apostolic Canons, accused the Latins of having ceased to observe the commands relating to blood and strangled meat as given in Acts 15:29.[72] In fact the issue of unclean foods regularly appeared on the lists of errors the Byzantines thought the Latins committed.[73] It is of interest that in a letter dated 684, Athanasius II (r. 683-686), the Syrian Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, exhorted his bishops to stop their congregations from accepting sacrifices offered to them by Muslims, because of the apostolic command to abstain from blood and meat that had been strangled.[74] During the Lenten period Eastern Christians were obliged to abstain from not only meat but dairy products as well.[75] In the early eleventh century the Catholicos of the Church of the East, John V (r. 1000-1011), in response to a query from the metropolitan of Merv, gave permission for local Turks to drink milk during Lent.[76] The tradition of vegetarianism among Eastern Christian monastics is mentioned by the Muslim

[66] Ibid., 214.
[67] MOULE 1930, 140.
[68] JACKSON 1990, 101-104.
[69] See ROGGEMA 2003.
[70] ROSSABI 2009, 200-201.
[71] BOYLE 1971, 294.
[72] PARRY 2005, 182, n. 64.
[73] KOLBABA 2000, ch. 7.
[74] EBIED 2013.
[75] JACKSON 1990, 204; PARRY 2005, 184.
[76] MINGANA 1925, 309.

writer Abd al-Jabbār (937-1025) in a legend about the metropolitan of Khorasan who was partial to birds fried in a pan, who when told by the Catholicos that he should not be eating them, shooed the birds away so they flew out of the pan they were frying in.[77]

Elsewhere Rubruck writes of Christian priests taking part in the Mongol spring festival celebrating the first fruits of mare's milk:

> On the ninth day of the moon of May, moreover, they assemble all the white mares in the herd and consecrate them; and the Christian priests are also required to gather there along with their incense burners. Then they sprinkle newly made kumis on the ground and that day hold a great festival, since this is the occasion when they reckon on drinking new kumis for the first time, like the custom that obtains among us in some places regarding wine on the feast of St Bartholomew ...[78]

This ritual is described in the *Yuanshi* and the fact that Christian priests, most of whom would have been from the Church of the East, were required to participate in the festival, affirms the principle of accommodation practiced by the Mongols in relation to foreign religions. At one point Rubruck describes the process of making of *kumis* and expresses his fondness for it.[79]

Another Franciscan Peregrine of Castello who was bishop of Zayton (Quanzhou) in South China and who died in 1323, reports that there were 30,000 Alans under the command of the Great Khan,[80] and that these men with their families went to hear Archbishop John of Montecorvino preach in Khanbaliq (Beijing).[81] In 1336 the leaders of the Christian community of Alans in Khanbaliq sent a petition to Pope Benedict XII (r.1334-42) asking him to send an archbishop to China to succeed John of Montecorvino, who had died eight years earlier. The embassy also carried a letter from the Great Khan requesting diplomatic exchanges with the Pope in which he referred to the Alans as 'his servants and Christian sons'. This embassy resulted in the eventual arrival of the Franciscan John of Marignolli at the Mongol court in 1342 who reports that John of Montecorvino was revered as a saint by the Alans.[82] This would seem to

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77 REYNOLDS-SAMIR 2010, 169-170. I understand a similar episode appears in the miracle stories associated with the Armenian Gregory of Narek (951-1003).

78 ACKSON 1990, 241-242.

79 JACKSON 1990, 190.

80 DAWSON 1955, 232-233. The round figure of 30,000 looks like a number for a large but uncertain quantity as it is used for the number of Christians in China by John of Cora and for the size of the Alan cavalry by al-Mas'ūdī. For John of Cora, see YULE-CORDIER, 1916, 102; for al-Mas'ūdī, see MINORSKY 1958, 157.

81 DAWSON 1955, 232-233.

82 RACHEWILTZ 1971, 195; IKLÉ 1976, 29-37.

suggest that the Alans in China had lost all contact with their Byzantine co-religionists.

Rubruck tells us that the Nestorians acknowledged that the Roman Church was the head of all the churches, and that they would accept a patriarch appointed by the Pope,[83] and on several occasions he concelebrated with them. Rabban Sauma (c.1220-1294) is said to have concelebrated with Pope Nicholas IV (r.1288-1292) in Rome, but the pontiff did not issue a papal decree investing the Nestorian catholicate with authority over all Christians in the East,[84] which would have gone some way to satisfying Rubruck's wishful-thinking, and perhaps Rabban Sauma's hopes. This desire by the Nestorians to establish relations with Rome under the Mongols is an interesting parallel to their need to be identified with *Da Qin* or *Fulin* in the Tang period.[85] Taken in conjunction with the attitude of Melkites, such as Theodore Abū Qurrah, it would appear that for Christian minorities outside the borders of Christendom a sense of identity with Rome was a form of survival mechanism. In a way it anticipated and then coincided with, the Uniate movement initiated by the Crusades to meet the desire felt by some Eastern Christian communities for recognition by Rome.[86] Although union with Rome caused schism across the Eastern Christian world it provided a sense of protection and security denied to ethnic and autocephalous churches.

Conclusion

It can be seen from the evidence that we have reviewed that there were Byzantine-rite Christians in Central Asia by the eighth century and in China among the Alans by the thirteenth century. We have also seen that contacts between the Melkites and the Church of the East were strained at times because of the perceived issue of disloyalty. As the Melkite communities were settled as a result of deportation they formed a minority and were therefore dependent to some extent on the goodwill of their overlords. That the Melkites have not received the same attention as the Church of the East is due in part to the scant archaeological and documentary evidence from Central Asia and China, but perhaps this will change in the future if and when new discoveries are made.

83 JACKSON 1990, 213-214.
84 MOULE 1930, 112-114; ROSSABI 1992, 164.
85 LIU 2013; LIN YING 2007.
86 For overtures to and by the Church of the East, see AWA ROYEL 2012.

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ON CHRISTIANITY AMONG CENTRAL ASIAN AND SYR DARYAN OGHUZ AND THEIR POSSIBLE NESTORIAN CONNECTIONS

Mehmet TEZCAN
Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey

Putting aside the spread of Christianity in Central Asia and Syr Daryan region through Northern Caucasus for now, I would like to dwell upon two issues asserted by Chwolson a hundred years ago and then by Barthold, which are often mentioned in some studies even today. I would like to address the issues whether Christianity spread among the Oghuz who were settled in Syr Darya, how was their relation with the Toquz-Oghuz (or Toquz-Ghuzz), and whether there were traces of Christianity in old Oghuz cities in the region of Syr Darya. The first of such mentioned issues deals with the names of Seljuk Beg's children; and the second concerns the statements by historians Zakariya al-Qazvīnī and W. Barthold, which describe the Oghuz as Christian; and the third focuses on the replies given by Zaki Validi [Togan] to such statements as well as our comments in this regard.

On the Subject of Christianity among the Oghuz and the Current Situation
To our knowledge, the opinion of some Western scholars about Christianity among the Oghuz originates from three basic aspects: (1). Considering Syr Daryan Oghuz as the same as Toquz-Oghuz in the East. The Uyghurs were derived from them and there were Christian Turks as well as people with other religions (such as Buddhism and Manichaism) among the Toquz-Oghuz and Qarluq regions; (2). The Syr-Daryan coasts settled by the Oghuz who established the Seljuk Empire during mid. 11th century, were close to the Khwarezm region where Christian elements present and names of Seljuk Beg's children were the names used by Christians; (3). Inclusion of Christianity among some Oghuz groups, who defeated Sultan Sanjar, the Seljukid Sultan, during mid. 12th century and joined the Kara-Khitay who came from the East, rebelled against Sultan Sanjar and took Sanjar as a captive, which was found in sources such as Kazvīnī.

Identifying Syr Daryan Oghuz and Toquz-Oghuz

The Oghuz in Syr Daryan region, with a known ethnonym "Oghuz", occupied this region during the 9th century by suppressing some Turkic tribes such as Kangar and Pechenegs and some Finnish-Ugrian groups. They founded the Empire of the Oghuz Yabgu there during 10th -11th centuries. This ethnonym was used from the beginning in order to refer to nomad Turkic groups settling and living collectively in the environs of the Caspian Sea, Aral Lake and lower

Syr Daryan coasts.[1] By transferring from Arabian geographers Ibn Havqal and Al-Istakhrī, Al-Idrisī (1100-1166), the Arabian geographer of the 12th century, describes the country of Guzz in the 8th Section of 5th Clime of his work called *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq.*[2] In his book *Kitāb Rogar* (Roger's Book), Idrisi separates the region which was inhabited by the Oghuz and named it "Al-Guziya", into two parts: Former Oghuz country and New Oghuz country According to a map dating back to 1154, Former Oghuz country was located between "southeast of Khwārezm Lake (Aral) and south of Ruza, and according to a later map it was located in the region surrounded by "Karatav of Syr Darya, Chu River and western extensions of Tianshan". However, it is certain that such information is not enough. According to Al-Idrisi, the New Oghuz country was Yangi-kant and its environs where Oghuz rulers were spending their winter and their most important military base of was Yangi-kant.[3] As a matter of fact, certain sources of that period call the capital of *Yabgu* as "Yangi Winter Quarter". As demonstrated by archaeological excavations, Yangi-kant is a settlement area which dates back to ancient times, and where not only Khwarezmians but also the sedentary Oghuz lived and the majority of its population was composed of the Oghuz.[4] According to denotation of Islamic resources, *beg* of Oghuz Yabgus was called *yabgu* or *baygu.* There were also small ethnic groups, such as Turks from western regions of Zhetisu (Semirechie) and tribes from Ob' and Irtysh. However, towards the mid-eleventh century, as a result of attacks made from the North by the Kipchak, who were believed to be Christians in the *Epic of Dede Korkut*, the Oghuz had to migrate to other places.[5]

According to the citations referred to by sources of the 9th and the 10th centuries, these Oghuz in Syr Darya region belonged to Shamanic traditions and sources give no information that there were Christians. The Oghuz, trading in central regions of Syr Darya or Transoxiana and visiting cities, used to come across with Muslim tradesmen coming there for trade, as well. For instance, Al-Idrisī states that the Oghuz were trading with the regions of Gorgān and Khwārezm.[6]

Questions arise as to where and when the Oghuz came to the Syr Daryan coasts, when and how they became known in the sources as the Turkic groups with the name "Toquz-Oghuz or Toquz-Ghuzz" who settled to the east, in Xinjiang and northern Mongolia. In the Orkhon inscriptions, "Toquz-Oghuz" is mentioned as a separate group settling to the north of Orkhon region and was included in *Tōlis Bodun.* It is known that they were not a single ethnic group; they were a political group consisting of 9 tribes, therefore they were named as "*zhiuxing*" (nine tribes/surnames) in Chinese sources. During the First Turkic Kaghanate

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1 SÜMER 2002, 302.
2 See KONOVALOVA 2006, 136, n. 31.
3 KONOVALOVA, 136, dn. 31.
4 AGACANOV 2002, 198-200.
5 AGACANOV 2006, 19-20.
6 AGACANOV 2002, 199.

(552-630), there were two significant political groups; *Türük Bodun* and *Tōlis Bodun*. Against the *Türük* that founded the state were the *Tōlis* led later by the Uyghurs, and they were including the Tokuz Oghuz composed of Nine Tribes. Struggling for sovereignty since the beginning, the Uyghurs in this group overthrew the Türük and gave the power to the Tokuz Oghuz in 745. After collapse of Uyghurs caused by the Kyrgyz in 840, some of these Tokuz Oghuz tribes migrated to Xinjiang and landed in eastern part of Issık-Kōl together with Uyghurs; Islamic sources named them as "Toquz-ghuzz". The Qarluq came to the Zhetisu region before 776;[7] they invaded the Chu and Talas valleys.[8] According to P. Golden, while Qarluqs were left *yabgu*, the Oghuz were most probably right *yabgu*. The darkest period of the Oghuz who settled in Syr Darya region, though no sources mention when they settled there, was, without doubt, the mid- 8th century during which they came to Syr Darya region;[9] the title of *yabgu*, which disappeared before, emerged again among the Oghuz of Syr Daryan coasts during early 10th century.[10] When the Uyghur Kaghanate in Orkhon region collapsed during 840s, nearly 15 tribes from Uyghurs came towards Eastern Tianshan region towards 860s and founded a state there known as the "Toquz-Ghuzz State" in Islamic sources; this state, survived separately until Genghis Khan's Empire. Islamic sources of the 10th century separate the *Toquz-ghuzz* and the *Oghuz* called "Ghuzz", because according to them, the *Ghuzz* settled between the Caspian Sea and the Middle Syr Darya, whereas *Toquz-Ghuzz* settled in Xinjiang.[11] According to one of these sources, *Hudūd al-Ālam*, Toquz Oghuz were still living in the east of Tianshan, in other words in the regions which were neighbours of the main regions of the Uyghur Kaghanate, namely China and Tibet.[12] Accordingly, the Toquz-Ghuzz, mentioned in Islamic sources must be Uyghurs.[13]

However, as it is seen below, the complexity in Oghuz - Toquz-Oghuzz connection in Orkhon inscriptions seems to be reflected in Islamic sources; because, Sharaf al-Zamān Tāhir al-Marvazī, who wrote his work in the Seljukid palace during the late 11th century and early 12th century, stated that one group of

7 AGAJANOV 1998,62.

8 HUDUD AL-ALAM 1937, 264.

9 AGADJANOV says: "The Oghuz tribes of western Central Asia also played a part in these tumultuous events. The Karluk conquest of the western T'ien Shan led to a conflict with the Oghuz of the Issyk-kül region. In the course of this struggle for power, many of the Oghuz apparently moved to the southwestern regions of western Central Asia. To judge by some of the archaeological evidence, the Oghuz crossed the middle reaches of the Syr Darya and the foothills of the Karatau in this migration. From there they gradually began to penetrate to the Aral steppes and the northern shores of the Caspian. In the first half of the ninth century there are references to the presence of the Oghuz on the boundaries of Khurasan, where they carried out armed raids." (AGADJANOV 1998, 62).

10 GOLDEN 2003, 51.

11 See HUDUD AL-ALAM 1937, 265.

12 HUDUD AL-ALAM 1937, 94, 264-265; KONOVALOVA 2006, 136, n. 31.

13 See HUDUD AL-ALAM 1937, 263-277, 279.

Turks, named *Ghuzz / Oghuz* and composed of 12 tribes, was named as *Toquz-ghuzz* too and they were settled in Khwārezm and Transoxiana regions together with the ruler called *Toguz-Hakan*.[14] According to C. E. Bosworth, this information must possibly belong to the early periods of the Sāmānids and the period when the Oghuz led a nomadic life in the Aral Lake and the Lower Syr Daryan coasts.[15] Some of the researchers, particularly Barthold, consider the Toquz-Ghuzz or Toquz Oghuz and the Oghuz in the Syr Daryan coasts from the same ethnic origin due to resemblance of the names;[16] other scholars accept those in the west and the east as separate communities.[17] P. Golden, who conducted a specific study on Oghuz immigrations known to the west as from the 8th century, states that Islamic sources refer to Uyghurs by saying *Toquz-Oghuz* or *Toquz-Ghuzz*, and says the following about the ethnic relationship between the Oghuz and Tokuz-Oghuz:

> Bearing in mind, then, that Oğuz is originally a *terminus technicus politicus*, its appearance at various times and places in the Turkic World does not necessarily imply that the peoples bearing this designation belong to or are descendants of one and the same ethnos. … It is not clear from the inscriptions whether Oğuz and Tokuz Oğuz, the two most constant terms, designate one and the same or different tribal confederations; they may well have done both. … The Uyğurs were probably connected with the Tokuz Oğuz through the period of the Second Qağanate (c. 682-744) and beyond, and elements of the Tokuz Oğuz were undoubtedly present amongst the Uyğurs (744-840 rule in Mongolia) both before and after 840. But they were different and distinct peoples…[18]

To our knowledge, the Easterners were a political group and denominated with such name meaning "nine tribes" due to the fact that they were composed of nine tribes; on the other hand, the Westerns descended from Oghuz Khan according to the Oghuz organization and the *Epic of Oghuz Khan*, had an ethnic identity from the beginning. As a matter of fact, Mahmud al-Kashgari stated clearly in the 11th century with examples that they were different from other Turkic groups in the East in terms of many aspects including tradition, custom and language. According to Oghuz tradition, there was a relation between the Qarluq, who did not descend from Oghuz Khan but was one of tribes named by *Oghuz*, and *Toquz-Oghuz*. According to the statement of historian Gardizī, some Toquz Oghuz, left their own tribes and joined these Qarluq.[19] Among other

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14 MİNORSKY 1942, 29; GOLDEN 1992,206.

15 According to GOLDEN, "In any event, we have little in the way of direct evidence linking the Oğuz who appear in the Syr Darya to either of these confederations. The earliest history, then, of the Transoxanian Oğuz, too often taken for granted because of the Inner Asian antecedents of the ethnonym Oğuz, is difficult to reconstruct due to the paucity and imprecision of our sources." See GOLDEN 1992, 206; BOSWORTH 2011, 14.

16 See BARTOLD 1963, 553-554; TEKİN 1994, 7 (T 15), 23 (62); RYBATZKI 1997, 46-47 (T 9), 74 (T 62); AYDIN 2012, 130 (O D 5-D 6).

17 See HUDUD AL-ALAM 1937, 266; MARQUART 1898, 23-24; MARQUART 1914, 35-36.

18 GOLDEN 2003, 47-48; HAMILTON 1997, 190, 196, 230.

19 HUDUD AL-ALAM 1937, 277; DICKENS 2010, 124.

Turkic groups in the East, the Uyghur and the Qarluq and the Toquz-Oghuz in Fergana region, there were Christians as well as fellows of other religions.[20] Such information is not included in written sources related at least to the Oghuz of Lower Syr-Daryan coast. Maybe, examining carefully the cities of Oghuz, which have been determined both historically and archaeologically in the Syr Darya region and in archaeological aspects would be more important in this regard.

Cities of the Syr Daryan Oghuz and Traces of Christianity

From the early 10th century, Islamic geographic sources mentioned about some cities belonging to the Oghuz both in Middle and Lower Syr Daryan courses; the results of many archaeological researches performed there have confirmed this. Some of them are Yangi-kant and some cities such as Jand and Huvara were settled by Oghuz *yabgus*, and it is stated that in some of these cities most of the population were composed of the Oghuz.[21] Mahmud al-Kashgari, writing during mid 11th century, gave the names of Sepren, Karachuk, Sugnak, Karnak and Sitgün as the "Oghuz cities".[22] According to Mahmud al-Kashgari, Karachuk was the name of the city Fārāb (later Otrar[23]). Apart from Mahmud al-Kashgari, Al-Idrisi, geographer of the 12th century, also mentioned Oghuz cities. As al-Idrisi says that "the Oghuz have many cities; these extend towards the north and the west",[24] archaeological researches show that a high-cultural life was seen in these Oghuz cities.

The archaeological researches carried out have revealed the ruins of ancient cities in this region and determined sometimes ruins of new cities. According to the items unearthed, as a result of examination of such ruins and interpretations made in terms of art history, traces of Christianity were found in some Oghuz cities; for example church ruins were found. It should be taken normally that the Orthodox Christians and the Oghuz contacted with each other due to trade activities made both with Muslims in the south and Nestorian Christians, Manichean and Buddhist Turkic groups in the east and the Khwārezm region. Some of these cities, such as Fārāb (Otrar) during the early 10th century, were cities settled by people, who were members of such religions mostly in terms of population. Archaeological excavations carried out in Talas river valley, in the city of Suyāb or Ak-Beshim, which was deemed as the capital of the Western Turkish Kaghanate once upon a time, unearthed a temple here. Researchers emphasise that this is a church. However, today it is understood that this city belongs

20 DICKENS 2010, 125 (From Gardezī: "The Toguz Oguz Xaqan traditionally belongs to the Manichaean sect. There are, however, within his metropolis and dominions Christians [tarsa]").

21 See CAN 2002, 153.

22 DLT 1985, I-436, 487, 471, 473, 443.

23 About the city Otrar, see BAYPAKOV and NASIROV 1991, 29-30.

24 See SÜMER 1980, 41-42.

to the Qarluqs to whom Christian artefacts of Inner Asia and the Ural region of the 7th-8th centuries were attributed, and they had no relation with the Oghuz.[25] In Central Asia, the cities and regions where traces of Christianity, especially of Nestorianism were testified to through archaeological discoveries, were located in Sogd, Zhetisu and the Xinjiang area. For instance, the Zhetisu region,[26] in which Nestorian gravestones are located, was a place once inhabited by Kangly Turks according to Barthold.[27] Recently, evidences related to Nestorianism have been found in the Samarkand region.[28] However, findings showing the Oghuz connection to Christianity have not been found yet in the mostly populated cities of the Oghuz in the Lower Syr Daryan course.

On the Christian Names Given to the Children of Seljuk Beg

This subject has originally arisen from the statement in the work of Chwolson published in 1890 with relation to the gravestones after he was reminded by Smirnov of the issue that the children of Seljuk Beg had Christian names during the discovery of Zhetisu gravestones in the late 19th century.[29] Barthold used such information in his article on "History of Christianity in Central Asia down to the Mongol Invasion" published in Russian in the *Journal of Russian Archaeology Association* in 1893 and after in German in Tübingen in 1901; this article made tremendous impact both in European and Turkish press, and accordingly such view started to spread.

Barthold's article mentioned above was published in the Journal *Turkic Studies* (*Türkiyat Mecmuası, TM*) in Turkey in 1925. It is understood that in Turkey, after Chwolson's article, this issue was mentioned by Necib Asım, a famous

[25] See ESIN 1978, 134-135; BOGOMOLOV 1994, 71; GORYACHEVA and PEREGUDOVA, 1994, 84-87; KLEIN 2000, 113-121; BAYPAKOV and NASIROV 1991, 23-24, 40-41; BAIPAKOV 2002, 749. BAYPAKOV also says: "In the 7th and 8th centuries Nestorian studies were widely spread in the towns of South Kazakhstan and Semirechie. There were Nestorian Churches in many towns. Under Patriarch Timothy (718-819), Christianity was accepted by the tsar of Turks, probably, by Karluk djabgu. Between the 9th and 10th centuries, the Karluk metropolis was formed, the Christian churches acted in Taraz and Mirki, Christians lived in the towns of Syr-Daria. Findings connected with Nestorian studies in Semirechie and South Kazakhstan towns confirm the information of written sources. In Ak-Beshim town there were found the remains of a Christian church. During the excavations of the necropolis of Djamukat and Nawaket towns, the burials of Christians with silver and bronze Christ [figurs?] were discovered. … During the excavations of Taraz, in the layer of the sixth to the eighth centuries, a ceramic mug was found with the inscription 'Peter and Gauriil' " (BAYPAKOV 2002, 749). As for some examples of Nestorian mortars and cross from VII-IX cc. found in Taraz, see BAYPAKOV and NASIROV 1991, 155.

[26] See KLEIN 2000, 101-197; DICKENS 2010, 127-129.

[27] See BOGOMOLOV, BURYAKOV, JUKOVA, MUSAKAEVA, SHISHKINA 1994, 18; YORULMAZ 2012, 90.

[28] See BOGOMOLOV, BURYAKOV, JUKOVA, MUSAKAEVA, SHISHKINA 1994, 14; MUSAKAEVA 1994.

[29] CHWOLSON 1890, 107.

Turkish scholar, in his work named *Türk Tarihi (Turkish History)*[30] and by Dr. Rıza Nur, another Turkish scholar, in his work *Türk Tarihi (Turkish History)*.[31] In these works it was claimed that the Seljuk's children were Christians, having the names such as "Yunus, Mikāil and Musa" which are "Yunas, Michael/Mihail/ Mihal and Moiz", and that they did not accept Islam. Even at this occasion, it was also claimed that the Seljukids were descended from the Keraits and Saljiuts. However, they had no relation with the Seljuks because they were Christians of the Mongol period. One of Seljuk's sons named "Arslan" in the work of Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233),[32] and "Israel" in the work of Gardezī. Barthold, while dwelling upon Islamic sources in his work called *Turkistan down to the Mongol Invasion* published in 1901 (in Russian), corrected the related information in Gardezī and asserted that "Arslan" is a Turkish name of such person and "Israel" is his Islamic name.[33] Zaki Validi [Togan] recognizes such objection of Barthold and asserts new evidences confirming Barthold and says:

> No doubt about that. As is seen always, *mullahs* knowing Arabic among today's Kyrgyzs still convert Turkish names into a suitable Arabic name while writing in order to conform to the book. This is the same in all procedural documents. It was the same in the past. That's why they called the word "Arslan" as "Israel". Names of Mikail and Davud are among well-known Turkish names such as "Mekez, Beken, Tevti, Davtay" and may have been Islamicised and written as Mikail and Davud by *mullahs*. On the other hand, I do not deny the possibility of naming Seljuk's children Muslim names such as "Davud, Yunus" even during their birth… With respect to the name "Mikail", as mentioned by Barthold, it is necessary to say again that such name was used by the Muslims too. For example, Yākut [al-Hamawī] mentions the names of people "Mikāl b. Abd al-Vāhid" and "Mikāil al-Khorasānī" in "Mekel" article of "*Tāc al-Arūs*", "Abū Sa'id Mikāil b. Hanafiyya". During the Seljukid period, names of true Muslims "Ahmad Mikāil", "Ahmad b. Ali b. İsmāil Mikalī" and "Ali Mikāil" are mentioned in the country of the Ghaznavids. There is no need to make an explanation about the names "Yunus" and "Davud".[34]

Barthold came to the University of Istanbul in 1926 at the invitations of Fuad Köprülü and A. Zaki Validi, and he gave 12 lectures on the history and culture of Central Asian Turks for students and they were translated into Turkish and published a year later.[35] Here Barthold mentioned the issue of Christianity among the Oghuz only in a single paragraph.[36] Barthold briefly stated that the

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30 NECIB ASIM 1316, 244 and n. 1.
31 RIZA NUR 1342, 19. For either works, again see TOGAN 1928, 528, n. 2.
32 See IBN AL-ATHĪR 2002, 13-14 ("Arslan ibn Saljuq").
33 BARTOL'D 1963a, 346, n. 6.
34 TOGAN 2012, 528; again TOGAN 1981, 184.
35 See BARTHOLD 1935, 1-2.
36 See BARTHOLD 1935, 104; BARTOLD 1968, 92; BARTHOLD 1975, 140-141; BARTHOLD 2006, 85.

Oghuz accepted Christianity by means of commercial relations with Khwārezm region, the Christians in Khwārezm were not Nestorian but Orthodox like most of the Christians in Iran and Turkestan, and it was possible that the Oghuz adopted Christianity, in other words the Orthodoxy. Thereby, he stated that his the idea of Christianity among the Oghuz was based on a story told by Qazvīnī who considered the 11th century historian Al-Bīrūnī of Khwarezm as the main source. The information from Al-Bīrūnī is about a festival (*Kalendas*) among the Christians of Khwarezm without any implication of Christianity.[37] Upon the notice of Zaki Validi, as stated by Barthold, there may have been a possibility of post facto addition of such information taken by Qazvīnī from the main source of Al-Bīrūnī. By referring to Marquart, Barthold stated such situation[38] and it had already been indicated by Zaki Validi.

Following Barthold, some other Russian historians mentioned that the names of Seljuk's children were Christian ones; on the other hand, the ones studying on Jewish Khazar Turks, such as D. Dunlop, did not consider the foregoing conceivable and stated that such names were Jewish names. While Dunlop stated that such kind of names were Judaic names used in the Middle Ages, he mentioned that the reason why the Seljuk gave such names to their children was to distinguish themselves from the Khazars.[39] Dunlop especially finds the name "Israel" strange; by referring to Cl. Cahen, he states that if there was a Muslim with this name (*Haji Israil*) in the Middle Ages, he would be considered as a foreigner.[40] However, conflicts and even wars between the Khazars and such Oghuz were mentioned in sources of an earlier period such as by Ibn Fadlān. The first conflict started during the first quarter of the 10th century and continued until the collapse of Khazar Kaghanate in 965.[41]

It is beneficial to add the following by giving a few examples about the statements of Zaki Validi: during the Middle Ages, all nomad Turkic and Mongolian tribes, especially the Oghuz, were not so fanatic while naming their children both in terms of religion and politics whether they were Muslims or others. For instance, in the 11th century, during the birth of Temujin (Genghis), the future leader of the Mongols, his father Yasugai Baghatur was returning from a war with the Tatars, because there was a blood feud between the Mongols and the Tatars, which also had a political aspect. When Yasugai learned that his son was born, he asked the name of Tatar captured in the tent and he gave the name of this captive Tatar to his son, namely *Temujin*.[42]

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37 About the Melkite Christians and their festival, see S. P. Tolstov: "Новогодний праздник "Каландас" у хорезмийских христиан начала XI века (в связи с историей хорезмийско-хазарских отношений)", *SE*, 1946-2, 87-108. http://kungrad.com/history/etno/kalandas

38 See BARTOLD 1968, 92, n. 11.

39 Bk. AGACANOV 2002, 223; Rice 1961, 27.

40 DUNLOP 1954, 260-261; DUNLOP 2008, 279-280.

41 AGACANOV 2002, 223.

42 See *SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS* 2006, 13.

We will also give some examples about the Oghuz in Anatolia in the Islamic period. In this regard, while expressing opinion by referring to the Turkish names and the Oghuz in history, it is helpful to pay attention to the categories of name-giving among the Turks[43] and to be careful while deriving an absolute religious result from these. To conclude, it is baseless to dwell upon the relation of names of Seljuk Beg's children with Judaism, Christianity or Islam that they would adopt later. As a matter of fact, Barthold, in his later studies and lectures, did not dwelled on the possibility that such names are associated with Christianity or the Jewishness of the Seljukids.

Historian Kazvīnī's Knowledge about Christianity among the Oghuz Who Rebelled against Sultan Sanjar

Towards the end of the period of Sultan Sanjar, deemed as "the 2nd Imperial Period of Seljukids" by one Turkish historian, the Empire was shaken by the invasion of the Kara-Khitay who came from the east and occupied Transoxiana and Khorasan. This Kara-Khitay army, including non-Muslim Turkic groups, entered into the lands of the Seljuks with the support of nearby states that were not satisfied with the governance of the Seljuks. Sanjar was defeated during the battle made in Katvan located near Samarkand in 1141 and had to retreat from the region; and the dominance of the region passed to the Kara Khitay. It is asserted that some of the rulers of the Kara-Khitay during that period were Christian or Buddhist. A large part of the Syr Daryan Oghuz, settled in the Middle Syr Daryan coasts and on the skirts of Karatav, left the region upon pressure of the Qarluq firstly and the attack of the Kara-Khitay later. The sources state that they went towards Khorasan and the Persian region.[44] The Oghuz were still loyal directly to Sultan Sanjar and were settling in Balkh, Khuttalān and Sagāniān regions. In the defeat of Sanjar in 1141, not only the Kara-Khitay but also the Khwarezmians as well as the said Oghuz must have played a great part. Korkut and Tuti Begs, who were the leaders of the Oghuz in the Balkh region and loyal to Sultan Sanjar,[45] complained about Balkh governor Kamach to the Sultan towards 1153 since they were dissatisfied with his governance; but when they could not get a result, they rebelled. The name of one of the rebellious Oghuz leaders was Dinar. Dinar conquered important Khorāsān cities such as Serahs and Merv which was one of the capitals of the Sultan.[46] Fighting against the rebellious Oghuz, Sultan Sanjar was defeated in the battle held against the Oghuz of Balkh in 1153 and was captured by them; he was taken as a captive by them for about two years.[47] The Oghuz did not fail in respect for their captive Sultan. However, they continued their common predatory

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43 See RASONYI 1953, 338-345; RASONYI 1976, 216; RASONYI 1982, 291-296.

44 AGACANOV 2002, 337-338; BIRAN 2005, 51.

45 See BOSWORTH 1968, 152-153.

46 AGACANOV 2002, 353.

47 See KÖYMEN 1984, 414-459; AGACANOV 2006, 291-321; AYAN 2007, 27-40.

habits and overrun many places in Iran. They damaged the people in the cities, which they captured, and murdered most of them. That's why the Iranians did not want to surrender and showed resistance; however, massacres and damages made by the Oghuz continued increasingly. Thus in some sources the Oghuz were mentioned with the words such as "*kâfir*" (infidel)[48] or "*Nasâri*" (Christian) as done by the historian Qazvīnī due to the letters written by Sanjar to many nearby states after escaping from the Oghuz, the Oghuz leader Tuti Beg capturing Sanjar and such loots and murders by the Oghuz in Iran.

Benjamin of Tudela, one of the Jewish travellers in the 12th century, used the statement "Sons of the Ghuzz from Infidel Turkic tribes" many times while mentioning the campaign of the "Persian emperor" (most probably Sultan Sanjar) against rebellious Oghuz, and he said: "The Kofar-al-Turak army was victorious and slew many of the Persian host, and the king of Persia fled with only a few followers to his own country"[49] As Agadjanov says, "The Oghuz were preserving their most heathen beliefs and rituals although they adopted Islam".[50]

Barthold used, as the single written source regarding the Oghuz and their Christianity, the work *Āthār al-Bilād* of Zakariya Al-Qazvīnī (d. 1283), who lived in the second half the 13th centuries but used the work *Al-Āthār al-Baqiyya* of Al-Bīrūnī, renowned Khwarezmian historian of the 11th century. Here, there are two issues: first is a stone which is adapted for the Oghuz and associated with Christianity, and the second one is the issue of "Christianity" of the Oghuz who captured Sultan Sanjar in 1153 as stated by Qazvīnī. Barthold dwelled upon this first issue in his article titled Christianity in Central Asia, and stated briefly in 12 lectures given by him in Istanbul by means of comparison with information in Al-Biruni in line with the criticisms of both Marquart and later Zaki Validi.

The rumour related to Christianity among the Oghuz told by Kazvīnī in his work *Āthār al-Bilād* can be considered as more important actually: Here Christianity among the Oghuz is tried to be demonstrated with a story and by means of a stone associated with Jesus. However, Qazvīnī also states that the Oghuz were *Nasārī*, in other words, Christians.[51]

The Record "Jabal-i Minkur / Mount Minkur" in Qazvīnī

Zaki Validi says the following by comparing the statements in both Qazvīnī and his source, Al-Bīrūnī:

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48 See KÖYMEN 1984, 460, n. 2; AGACANOV 2006, 308, n. 211.

49 See BENJAMIN OF TUDELA 1907, 61-62 (Turkish edition: TUDELA'LI BENJAMIN 2001, 77-80).

50 AGACANOV 2006, 308.

51 See AL-ASAR AL-BILAD 509, 510, 511, 514, 530, 535; TOGAN 2012, 528.

> The rumour told by Qazvīnī in printed copy from *Al-Āthār al-Baqiyya* of Al-Bīrūnī was written as follows: "The situation of shield-wide fresh water well in the mount called *Minkur* in Kimak lands is the same as this lake. This well is full of water. Even if an army drinks water from it, the water does not decrease a bit. There are the footprints of a person prostrating himself near the well, palm-print with fingers and knee-prints and also the footprint of a child and a nail-print of a donkey. The Oghuz Turks prostrate when they see them.[52]

Marquart analyzed the statement of Al-Bīrūnī in the place in which he determined from where the borders of the Kimaks and the Oghuz pass. Marquart reads the name "Minkur" here and describes the addition of "re" instead of "lam" with the influence of Iran and translates as ""Ming-köl-dağ" (Berg der tausend Quellen) from its origin. Barthold, on the other hand, transmitted the story about this rock only from Qazvīnī, as noted by Marquart, and he may have forgotten to state that Qazvīnī had quoted this information from Al-Bīrūnī or he may not have paid attention to it and compared it with Al-Bīrūnī. However; if not compared with Al-Bīrūnī, it is necessary to understand the fact that he quoted the statement at the end of the rumour of Qazvīnī, "because they are Christians (and) they attribute it to Jesus",[53] from Al-Bīrūnī. In Al-Bīrūnī, such statement has never existed; it has been added by Qazvīnī himself. By thinking that probably the end of statement in printed copy of *Al-Āthār al-Baqiyya* was omitted as a printing mistake, I have looked all perfect copies included in Istanbul Public Libraries (Public Library, Topkapı, Nur-u Osmaniye); however none of them includes the sentence in Qazvīnī. Supposing that the additional sentence of such statement in Qazvīnī is not a statement of this person and may have been quoted from an old source and maybe such statement was stated in Qazvīnī more detailed than in Al-Bīrūnī, Marquart said: "Qazvīnī's source may be only Al-Bīrūnī or the sources of both of them may be an older source."[54] In the magazine section of Köprülü Library in Istanbul, there was a booklet written unevenly among the most important geographic works in a magazine numbered 1623. The part containing information related to the Turks includes a statement resembling the stone in Cebel-i Minkur rock as mentioned above. The word "shajara" (genealogy) was written undotted as سحره as all the text in general and

[52] See ALBIRUNI 1879, 255: "Similar to this little lake is a sweet-water well in the district of the Kimak in a mountain called Maukur, as large as a great shield. The surface of its water is always on a level with its margin. Frequently a whole army drinks out of this well, and still it does not decrease as much as the breadth of a finger. Close to this well there are the traces of the foot, two hands with the fingers, and two knees of a man who had been worshipping there; also the traces of the foot of a child, and of the hoofs 40 of an ass. The Ghuzzi Turks worship) those traces when they see them"; EL-BIRUNI 2011, 268; MARQUART 1914, 101; DICKENS 2010, 126.

[53] See MARQUART 1914, 101 101 ("weil sie Christen sind und (diese Spuren) Jesus zuschreiben") and n. 4: "Herr Barthold zitiert jedoch nur Qazwini und vergisst dem Leser die wichtige Tatsache mitzuteilen, dass die Quelle dieser Nachricht al Beruni oder ein von beiden benutztes altes Werk ist").

[54] MARQUART 1914, 101.

maybe became "s.h.r" صحره . And the Turks in this statement were included together with the information related to the Turks, the Kimaks and the Kyrgyz who settled in the furthest north and the coldest places mentioned by historians Awfi and Ya'qubī. They used wild horses as well; they were well-known in the *Travel Book of Rubruck* and Timurid campaigns. Such information was not taken from Al-Bīrūnī; and was quoted from an ancient source, not available now, as a few old pieces of information mentioned in the booklet and Al-Bīrūnī may have taken from them. However, in this new source, there is no statement regarding the stone or the tree above it, or the relation of the stone to Christianity and the "Jesus cults". That's to say, Qazvīnī quoted the statement about "Jabal-i Min-kur" from Al-Bīrūnī and fabricated the additional statement: "because they are Christians (and) attribute it to Jesus".[55]

Togan lastly says the following about the sentence "because they are Christians (and) attribute it to Jesus" added by Qazvīnī to the rumour about "Jabal-i minkur" stone:

> This is a new fabrication over the former one. The traces on mentioned rock stone were accepted as religious doctrine belonging to Shamanism, Zoroastrianism in the old booklet in Köprülü Library, which is completely true. Shamanistic legends for saints (avliya), related to such traces on Stones, are very common among Altay Turks.[56]

On Christianity (*Nasârî*) among the Oghuz

After taking Sanjar as captive, when the Oghuz surrounded Nīshāpur, the people did not surrender but resisted. When the Oghuz invaded Nīshāpur in the winter of 1154 in the end, they carried out a great deal of massacre together with the mobs (*ayyars*) and deserters. In the work of Qazvīnī, it is said that while the *Ghuzz* (the Oghuz) who hold Sultan Sanjar as captive was surrounding Nīshāpur, "the people of Nīshāpur resisted seriously because the Oghuz were Nasarī". All other assumptions have been added based upon this statement of Qazvīnī. Such statement includes a sentence which asserts the probability that the Oghuz may have learned about Christianity by being neighbour to Khwārezm; another sentence by Abū Dulaf sets forth the non-availability of pictures in sanctuaries of the Oghuz but there is no statement regarding the Christian Oghuz.

Another remarkable issue in the statement of Qazvīnī about the Oghuz is that he accepts the Khorāsān Oghuz, who combatted with Sultan Sanjar and captured him, as "*Nasārī*". So to say, Qazvīnī was not informed about the Oghuz other than those ones, and Seljukids were a totally different tribe and the Oghuz were

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[55] TOGAN 2012, 529-530; DICKENS 2010, 126, n. 64.
[56] TOGAN 2012, 532.

a Christian tribe that was their enemy. According to Zaki Validi, this was totally untrue. The aforesaid Oghuz events were written by many contemporary authors and they exactly described the troubles experienced by the country of Khorāsān as a result of their plunders, raids, savagery and disorderliness. For instance, when the capital of the Seljuk Empire, Marv, was captured by the Oghuz after a long resistance; the Oghuz damaged the city and its people. They took captive of most of the people and plundered the city for three days and nights. They also massacred 11 men of God. Nīshāpur, on the other hand, was destroyed in a more awful manner compared to Marv. After murdering most of the people, it was thought that nobody survived and a mosque having a capacity of 2.000 people was set on fire together with people of Nīshāpur taking refuge in it. Hasan Yazdī, one of the people telling about events, says "Nobody can know how many people the Oghuz murdered in a few days". However, the same Yazdī also gives the attention to the fact that the ones going together with the Oghuz to Nīshāpur road were from lower class of the society and were idle. The historian Ibn al-Athīr also clearly states that the plunderers were *cunnings*, in other words the mobs (*ayyārs*).[57] In fact, the number of those plunderers was three times more than the number of the Oghuz. As said by the late Turkish historian M. A. Köymen, "no traces left from whole Iran, the mosques became the places where the Oghuz tied their horses"; no *khutba* (sermon) was read on behalf of the Oghuz in Khorāsān because there was no preacher or *minbar* to read the *khutba*. Local people said cursing words to the Oghuz but nobody told that they were *Nasārī* or non-Muslim. On the contrary, they said "How can a Muslim do such kind of things to another Muslim?"[58] and looked for mistakes in their behaviours.

The person who describes in the clearest manner this violence made by the Oghuz is the learned (*hâkim*) Anvarī. Anvarī stayed with Tuti Beg, the Oghuz leader, for a long time and he wrote encomiums to him, which were full of appraisal.[59] He praised Tuti Beg most among other Oghuz Begs. Anvarī sent his renowned encomium about disturbances of the Oghuz to the Sultan of the Karakhanids, Tamgach Khan Muhammad Ibrāhim b. Kızıl Arslan Muhammad, in Samarkand, along with the committee sent from Khorāsān in order to ask for help against the Oghuz. Although his poem only includes swearing to the Oghuz, he did not call them "*Nasārī*" (non-Muslim / infidel). On the contrary, it is mentioned that since the people did not accept their reign, and no *khutba* was read on behalf of them, there were no preacher or *minbar* in Khorāsān. In addition, the help of khan was asked by saying that the situation of Muslim people is worse than the infidel countries although they were Muslim. In Ibn al-Athīr and all other sources, the names of the heads of the Oghuz were mentioned and most

57 See BOSWORTH 1968, 153-154.
58 TOGAN 2012, 530.
59 See KÖYMEN 1984, 424-425, 436 (n.1).

of such names are Muslim names such as ‘Abd al-Hamīd, Bahtiyār, Mahmūd, Malik Dinar, ‘Alā al-Dīn Farhashah, etc.

Zakariya al-Qazvīnī, on the other hand, mentions, without doubt, the name of Tuti Beg as the leader of such Christian Oghuz. The whole name of Tuti Beg (or *Dudu Beg* in Turkish) is mentioned as “Nāsir al-Dīn Abū Shujā Tūtī Beg” in sources.[60] This person is a totally Muslim person according to the testimonial of his contemporaries. The coins dating back to such period are available in a “construction” book written in the period of Atsız, Khwarezmian ruler.[61] Here, it is understood that not only Tuti Beg but also his father and grandfather were Muslims. The Oghuz were subjected to cursing by some due to the fact that they gave harm to some Muslims; on the other hand they were also appraised by some as a tribe working for religion, namely Islam. For instance, the ones who conquered Gazna and Kirmān were illiterate Bedouins who were pure Muslims and according to Zaki Validi there was no doubt about it.

During the period when Mahmud al-Kashghari lived, i.e. two centuries before Zakariya Qazvīnī, the Oghuz were pure Muslims, too. There was no traces of Christian elements told about them during that period.[62] As a matter of fact, Mahmud al-Kashghari stated that the most important difference of the group called “Oghuz” or “Turkoman” was the fact that they were Muslims. The names “Oghuz” and “Turkoman” were used in order to distinguish them from the Turks, the majority of whom were members of other religions,. The historian of the 10th century, Mas’ūdī (893/94 - 956/57) also mentioned the Oghuz who settled down in Syr Darya basin; although the religions of the people living in Syr Darya basin and in eastem places were mentioned including the Toquz-ghuzz living in the Kucha region (who were Manichaens), there was no record that related them to Christianity.[63]

Zaki Validi has concluded the following in his article, which criticizes Barthold and the historian Qazvīnī:

> Just like the authors who confuse Balkan Bulgarians with Wolga Bulgarians, Qazvīnī, if his words are true, heard that there were people among the Oghuz and Kipchaks settled in environs of today's Southern Russia, Ukraine and Balkan between 12th-13th centuries who adopted Christianity and he attributed this to the former Oghuz of Turkistan. If not, he must have exactly fabricated it himself through inspiring from the complaints written due to the vicious acts of the Ghuz in Khorāsān. After discovering the booklet of Ibn Fadlān, the fact that the

[60] KÖYMEN 1984, 424, n. 3.

[61] TOGAN 2012, 531.(Tûti Beg’s title “Isfahsālār ajl-i kabīr Nāsır al-Dīn ‘Abū Shuja Tūti bin İshak bin al-Khizr”, and his Oghuz: “Tabakāt-i hashem-i Guze vefekahum Allahu lime-raşidu’d-din ve’d-dunya”).

[62] TOGAN 2012, 531.

[63] See MESUDI 2011, 96-98.For the Oghuz country, see TOGAN 2012, 531-532.

> Oghuz, while they were in Turkestan and in Ural province located to the east of Wolga basin, had no relation to Christianity was exactly evidenced.[64]

Regarding the Christian elements among the Oghuz who settled down in the Syr Darya region, I can say that in the lower and especially middle courses of the Syr Darya river, some of the Oghuz who had generally lived as nomads since ancient times but also founded some cities according to Islamic sources and reports of western travellers as well as archaeological data, were living in the cities. Due to the fact that their region was located on the important trade routes, they had political, cultural and commercial relations with tribes and states that settled in the West around the Aral Lake, Transoxiana and Khwārezm region, just as Turkic and Oghuz tribes mentioned with various names in the East. When considered within such framework, there may be people believing in different religions and belonging to different cultures and ethnic groups. As a general characteristic of nomad Turkic and Mongol groups, toleration for other beliefs and no prohibition for practicing those beliefs is a typical feature of the Oghuz as mentioned above.[65] In this regard, ruins of a church, synagogue, ***atash-gada*** (structure covered with a tomb and a burning fire in it) and even a masjid unearthed during archaeological excavations held in the Middle Syr Daryan coasts in some cities close to the Oghuz, should not be considered as evidences that they [the Oghuy] were members of one of these religions. During the period when the Oghuz settled in the Syr Daryan coasts and the Ustyurt region, sources from the 10th - 12th centuries show that a large part of them continued shamanist belief system before becoming Muslims in the early 11th century and even after becoming Muslims, such traditions and customs were partially preserved. However, it is possible that they may have adopted certain characteristics of the cultural or political environment which they entered into and the states which they were subjected to, such as, the Khazar Khaghanate, by being aware of the identity of these states. There is no direct information or document demonstrating that they were Christians. Some of the publications related to the Christian elements among them seem to be politically oriented. So to say, while Russian researchers tend to consider them as Orthodox, Western researchers consider them as Nestorian just like the Toquz-Ghuzz, Uyghurs and some Turkic or Mongol tribes in the 11th and 12th centuries.

In this regard, it is necessary to repeat: even today the names they used from some cultures or religions are partially far-fetching to demonstrate their religious belongings. For instance, Muslim Turks believe that Mohammad is the last prophet; however, among them there are also a great number of Turks who believe that in the judgement day Jesus will come to the earth and save people. There are still books which tell about "Jesus-Messiah" belief by interpreting

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64 TOGAN 2012, 532.

65 BAUSANI 1968, 540: "Göyük had strong leanings towards Christianity, even if he actually remained a shamanist".

verses from the *Qur'ān* and certain *Hadīths* in this way. For us, this does not indicate their being Christian but rather, they adopt Jesus as a prophet of Muslims just like Mohammad.

Regarding the statement by Qazvīnī on "Christianity" among the Oghuz due to the information on the cruelties and violence imposed by the Oghuz on the people in Iran and the Khorāsān regions in the 11th century, this information has not been mentioned in any other source. The source used by Qazvīnī, the historian of the 13th century goes back to Al-Bīrūnī who lived in earlier period and who was a witness of the region and the period; however, Al-Bīrūnī did not make any statement implying this. All Islamic sources of the related period mention the Oghuz affiliated to Sanjar, the Sultan of the Seljukids, as Muslims and there is no doubt of that. It is still very common today among the Oghuz Turks living in both Anatolia and Turkmenistan to call each other and be called by others as "kāfir", "kuffār" (infidel), "gavur" (giaour) and "Nasrānī" (Christian) due to their various acts or behaviours. For instance, when they do not approve an action, they say words such as "giaour" or "zyndyq" (godless - faithless) without any hesitation; as the sharpest swearing, "Allahsyz!" (Godless) and "Kitapsız!" (lit. without the Book) are used commonly among some Turkic groups. By the way, sometimes the word "kāfir" (infidel) is used today for appreciation.

In this regard, the words such as "kāfir" (infidel) and "kuffār" (heathen), and expressions such as "Nasrānī", seen in the Middle Ages and used by other Muslims and the Muslim Oghuz, are not used to show that they were Christians or infidels but to express a bad action which was not expected from a Muslim. Among such Muslims, as the word "zyndyq" (unbeliever) used sometimes in Anatolia, these words are like the repulsive expression "gawat" (pimp) included in *the Epic of Dede Qorqut*, the famous epic stories dating back to mid 8th century and early 9th century by the late Turkish historian F. Sümer and they are still used in Anatolia occasionally; however they do not have the aim of stating literal meaning, they just remind the person acting improperly.

Therefore, it is not true for some western researchers to attribute an actual value to the statements of Qazvīnī with respect to considering the Oghuz who lived in the 11th and the 12th centuries, as Christian. As a matter of fact, the sources of that period clearly stated that the Oghuz and their *begs* were Muslims. In our opinion, Qazvīnī must have expressed his reaction, as an Iranian and a person having displeasure about the acts of the Oghuz, because the cruelty, plunder and raid actions imposed by the Oghuz on Muslim people had not been experienced by local people until that day. During the rule of Tugrul Beg, the first sultan of the Seljukids, the Oghuz continued to do harm to the Muslim people in Iraqi region by means of plundering activities; and upon the request of local Arab chiefs, Tugrul Beg warned such Turkmen Oghuz leaders a few times; however, they did not pay attention to such warnings. Then Tugrul Beg collected

thousands of Turkomans together and made their thumbs cut in order to prevent them from shooting arrow ever again.

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Abbreviations:

AKDTYK – Atatürk Kültür Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu.
AKGWG – Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch - historische Klasse, Neue. Neue Folge.
ALASH - Acta Linguistica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.
CHI – Cambridge History of Iran. vol. 5. The Saljuq and Mongol Periods, edited by J. A. Boyle, Cambridge at the University Press 1968.
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JRAS – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
MAISSP – Mémoires de léAcadémie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg.
TDA – Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları.
TİD – Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi.
TM – Türkiyat Mecmuası.
TP – T'oung P'ao.
TTK – Türk Tarih Kurumu.
Türkler - Türkler, Eds. H. C. Güzel, K. Çiçek, S. Koca, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları: Ankara 2002.

AN ANACHRONISM IN THE STELE OF XI'AN – WHY HENANISHO?

Max DEEG
Cardiff University, UK

One of the most intriguing characteristics of the most comprehensive and earliest known document of the Church of the East in Tang-China, the stele-inscription of Xi'an 西安 (the ancient Tang Western capital of Chang'an 長安), is the space for interpretation in terms of broader context and details despite of the almost four hundred years of reception history of the text. And it is one of the details that I would like to discuss in this present paper. There are details contained in the inscription that have already been discussed *ad nauseam*, and there are some which have not, but for some reasons, attracted the attention of translators and commentators in the same way – and though it is certainly interesting to speculate why this is the case that the reasons for negligence are hardly evident in most cases.

As is well known, the relation between the shorter Syriac part of the inscription and the Chinese text poses a problem in itself, especially in the few cases where the two parts differ from each other. This concerns, e.g., the place name origin of the family of the two persons responsible for the erection of the stele, Yazadbozid / Yisi 伊斯, and his son Adam / Jingjing 景淨, which is called Balkh in the Syriac part and "Minor Royal City" (Xiaowangshe-zhi-cheng 小王舍之城) in the Chinese.[1] But even where both parts of the inscription agree, problems are not completely absent. I would like to discuss one of these points in this paper and suggest an explanation of the problems behind it.

From the Chinese and Syriac parts of the inscription, the date of the stele's erection can be specified to the day: it was erected on the 4th February, 781.[2] The two texts give as well, as one would expect, the name of the head of the Church of the East, the patriarch or catholicos, at that time still residing in Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Syriac Kôk^hê) – and it is here where the problem starts. The Syriac allows a clear identification of this patriarch as Henanisho, and the Chinese gives the title and the name in a sinisized form as *fazhu* 法主 ("Lord of the Law,

1 DEEG, forthcoming.
2 PELLIOT - FORTE 1996, 308f., note 281.

the *dharma*")[3] Ningshu 寧恕[4] , corresponding to it fairly well. The name of the patriarch and the date of the erection of the stele, however, create an anachronism.

From Syriac sources, the dates for the patriarchate of Henanisho II are well known: he was elected patriarch in the year 774 and died very probably in the fall (September?) of 779.[5] This means that the stele refers to a ruling patriarch who was not longer alive. One could add that Henanisho's successor, Timothy I, had already been elected and consecrated in May, 780 – this creates a kind of double anachronism in the stele which asks for a historical explanation, I would say, better than what has been given so far.

The standard explanation for this anachronism is that the message on the former patriarch's death and the subsequent but delayed election of his successor Timothy had not reached the Chinese capital yet.[6] Erica Hunter recently has raised doubts on this simplistic explanation.[7] Nobody has yet brought forward any concrete argument which supports the idea that the message of the Henanisho's death – as Hunter remarks, an utterly important one indeed – could not have travelled from Persia to the Chinese capital of Chang'an in the period of the Tang Dynasty. To be clear about the time lines here: we are talking about a period of nine months between the election of Timothy I as patriarch and the erection of the stele, or about one a half year between the assumed death of patriarch Henanisho II and the official dedication of the stele.

As for the question if the message concerning the death of the previous patriarch and/or the election and consecration of his successor could have made its way from the shores of the river Tigris, we have evidence that an emergency message could have been transmitted between the Chinese capital and the Western Regions (India or Persia; ca. 7500 km from Seleucia-Ctesiphon to

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3 I don't think that Lieu's 2013: 131, interpretation of *fazhu* 法主 as being identical with the title Syriac hapax legomenon *papsh* (emended reading for *fapsh*) is correct: (1). It is used for Jingjing / Adam who definitely was not a patriarch, and (2). There are serious phonological problems with such an identification; the early Middle Chinese (reconstruction Pulleyblank 1991) for *fazhu*: **puap-tɕǎu'* cannot correspond to *papsh* or *fapsh*.

4 The reduction of the tetra-syllabic name to its last two syllables followed the well-established model of reducing transliterations of Indic *dharma* names: see one of the most well-known examples Damo 達摩 for Putidamo 菩提達摩 = Skt. Bodhidharma; see also Takahashi 2013: 18.

5 CHABOT 1902, 515, note 3; DAUVILLIER 41, and 56, note 3.

6 DAUVILLIER, 64: "Il n'est pas surprenant que la nouvelle de la mort de Ḥᵉnànîšôʿ II ne fut pas encore parvenue en Chine, malgré l'existence de couriers réguliers …" See, for instance, also SAEKI 1916, 245; Saeki 1951, 106; MOULE 1930, 47. NICOLINI-ZANI 2006, 210, note 104.

7 HUNTER 2009, 74f.: "…, since the election of Timothy I was surrounded with much contention by his ecclesiastical peers, it may have been considered more expedient, in this situation of uncertainty, to retain the erstwhile patriarchal name to the emperor and his court." This interpretation is maintained by LIEU 2013, 131.

Chang'an) in less than half a year. Even normal travelling could be done in a reasonable time despite the distance and natural conditions. In the year 753 alone, there were three or even four embassies arriving from the Arabs at the court in Chang'an,[8]and it is hard to imagine that all these were dispatched overlapping each other. I would therefore say that the standard argument for the appearance of Henanisho's name in the inscription – that the message of his death could not have reached the community in China – is not really convincing. It also did not provide any further investigation in the nature and context of the Christian community at the time of the erection of the stele, which should be started through a discussion in a wider historical context.

But there is another reason that I started looking in a different direction for an explanation for the anachronism in the inscription. According to my opinion and interpretation, the stele inscription is a text with highly propagandistic intentionality and purpose, one of its aims being the demonstration of the close relationship between the Church of the East and the Tang imperial house. It is hardly conceivable, therefore, that the name of the patriarch – assuming that the community either knew of his death or even of the election of his successor – was put down without motivation. I would propose therefore to have a closer look on three aspects, which, taken together, may elucidate the puzzle: (1). The situation of the Jingjiao community in Tang China and its link to Central Asia or the wider region of Irak / Iran; (2). The situation of the central Church and its leadership in the political context of the Islamic caliphate; (3). The broader political context of the wider region which is, of course, the one of the relatively recently established Abbasid caliphate. Unfortunately the sources from and about the different contexts do not communicate with each other in the way that they refer to the events happening in the other sphere but are rather self-content, focusing on events in their own referential framework. This probably prevented earlier attempts by scholars certainly more qualified than me from bringing the threads together, but at the same time also distorted, I would claim, the explanation and possible solution to the problem.

(1). It can be assumed by now that most of the Christians in China at the time of the Tang Dynasty were Central Asians, and in the cases we know where they originally came from, e.g. by the names given in the Luoyang inscription, they were Sogdians.[9] In the case of the two main protagonists mentioned in the inscription, the person to whom it was dedicated, Yisi 伊斯 or Yazadbozid,[10] and its "author", Jingjing 景淨 or Adam, we know that their family originally hailed from Balkh in Tokharistan, and that in the family in the generation of Yisi's father, a certain Miles, probably had still resided there by then. Therefore all indications have so far shown that the active members of the community came from a region which belonged to one of the Central Asian sees of the Church of

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8 INABA 2011, 45.

the East. As for Balkh, it probably had close relations with – if it was not part of either – the see of Merv or Herat, a point I will readdress later.

In terms of the broader political situation in China, it is well known that the turning point of the fate of the Tang expansion to the West was the battle of Talas (Daluosi huizhan 怛羅斯會戰) or Artlakh in July, 751 in which the Arab forces of the Abbasid caliphate beat the Tang army led by the Sino-Korean general Gao Xianzhi 高仙芝 (?-755). It is normally assumed that after this event and in the turmoil of the subsequent An Lushan 安祿山 (755-763) Rebellion which almost overthrew the Tang ruler, the expansionist move of the Tang empire into the territories west of the Taklamakan desert was stopped, and that the Chinese were, in fact, retreating, and the Abbasid caliphate becoming in firm control of these territories. It is also thought that the relation between the two powers did not really turn sour but was quickly normalized again to the extent that Arab (Dashi 大食) forces helped the Tang to recover their capital Chang'an from the rebels. Recent researches by Inaba Minoru[11] and others, however, challenge some of these assumptions. This causes a considerable shift of the political scenario and invites to revisit the problem of a dead patriarch in the stele inscription in the wider historical context. Inaba and others think that these Arabs were former anti-Abbasid mercenaries who fled during the numerous revolts in the region between ca. 750 and 780 (see below, 3.) and after the reestablishment of the Abbasid rule over Khurasan and the adjacent regions. So one has to take into account not only a Sogdian and a Persian diaspora in China but also possibly some Arabs[12] from the wider region as well, who were not very much in favour of the Abbasid rule and much more supportive of the revolt movements in their provinces of origin.

(2). The decades before the erection of the stele were a turbulent time for the Church of the East in its central region in modern Irak. From the historical sources on the events around the death of Henanisho and the succession of Timothy, it becomes clear that this was a turbulent period for the Church of the East. The succession of Timothy was not undisputed and led to an interim schism of the Church.[13] Henanisho was, if we believe the sources, poisoned,[14] and it is to be assumed that rivalry between different parties in the church regarding the authority of the patriarch and a possible successor may have been in sway some time before his death. We should also remember that Henanisho

9 See GE 2009; TANG 2009.

10 On Yazadbozid / Yisi, see DEEG 2013.

11 INABA 2011.

12 It is, of course, difficult to determine if these "Arabs" were "Central Asianized Arabs" or "Arabisized Central Asians" (BECKWITH 2009, 143), but this certainly was not the point for the Chinese who just identified them as Arabs.

13 WRIGHT 1894, 191ff.; DAUVILLIER, 63f.; HUNTER 2009, 73.

14 CHABOT 1902, 515, note 3.

himself was elected against the candidate promoted by the caliph,[15] and this after a nine-year vacancy of the patriarchate.[16] Furthermore, under Henanisho's patriarchate the Abbasid caliph Al Mahdī (r.775-785) imposed oppressive measures against the Christians who were suspected to collaborate or at least to support morally the Byzantine empire.[17]

The nomination of a Metropolitan of Beth Sinaye named David by Timothy I, as reported in Thomas of Marga's history,[18] may reflect a relatively late attempt to influence the Church's outpost in the extreme East Asian corner of its *oikumene*. We know that the bishop of Merv, Joseph, belonged to the party opposing Timothy[19] and his election, a situation which created a schism of almost two years after the election. A substantial part of the Jingjiao community in China was coming from the wider region in which at least a part of the Church hierarchy opposed the newly elected patriarch, and it is difficult to believe that this position had nothing to do with the fact that they shared certain anti-Abbasid resentments with the various Arab groups in this region.

(3). The broader political situation in the regions of modern Irak and Iran was not less eventful than in China. In the year 750, the Abbasids defeated the Umayyad forces and erected their caliphate. Despite the fact that the Abbasids hailed from Merv, in the wider region of Khurasan, they were, in the first decades of their rule, challenged exactly from that region.[20] The last of these revolts, the one of al-Muqanna', "the veiled-one", who is said to have been a native from Balkh, the same city the family of Yazadbozid and Adam originated from, kicked off in 777 and lasted until the end of the year 779,[21] although al-Muqanna''s religious agenda and that of his predecessors in revolt and of his followers, the "white-clad", is not exactly clear (Manichaean, Islamo-Christian, Zoroastrian?[22]). In the light of these circumstances in a region that opposed and revolted against the Abbasid rule, one cannot help speculating about a connection between the Abbasid-supported election of Timothy after the death of Henanisho and a resistance from the higher clerics including the bishop of Merv,

15 HAGE 2007, 280, note 61. KALLFELZ 1995, 102.
16 CHABOT 1902, 515.
17 BAUM-WINKLER 2000, 59f.
18 HUNTER 2009, 74; DICKENS 2010, 120.
19 DAUVILLIER, 63.
20 FRYE 1954: 143, note 236.
21 FRYE 1954, 65ff., and 143ff., notes 237ff.; ELTON 1979: 137ff.; DANIEL 1979: 137ff.; INABA 2011: 44; and recently CRONE 2012, 106ff. According to the Chronicle of Bukhara, al-Muqanna' was killed only in the year 783: FRYE 1954, 65. Al-Tabari's record is translated in KENNEDY 1990, 196ff.
22 DE LA VAISSIÈRE 2005, 266: "... syncretistic revolts – midway between Shi'ism and Zoroastrism – ..."

Joseph, who later converted to Islam,[23] which certainly would have had an impact on the diaspora communities in China some of whom originally came from the Central Asian provinces which caused the Abbasid so much trouble in exactly the period when the stele was erected and referred to a patriarch who was certainly already known to be dead by that time.

If we think in terms of the policy of religion in the Tang empire towards the end of the 8th century and in the broader political context, some of the intriguing points around the figure of Henanishu / Ningshu in the inscription become, I would claim, clearer. That the patriarch is not mentioned in the main text of the stele is not astonishing when we think of the control which the Tang state exerted on religious communities. The biggest of these groups, the Buddhists, had no centralised organisational structures and no clear head, nor did the Daoists. This may explain why the Chinese term *fazhu* was chosen for the Syriac double title *catholicos* and *patriarch*: compared with other possible titles it played down the central role of the head of the Church in Abbasid-controlled Iran in order not to cause any raised eyebrows of the Tang imperial administration. Although after the battle of Talas in the year 751, no major conflict between the Tang Chinese forces and the Arabs is reported, it is to be supposed that the Central Asian border with the Abbasids was still considered a threatened and a threatening one from the Chinese side. A disputed patriarch like Timothy I. – if this knowledge really had come through to China by then – who was supported by the caliph and whose election had created an ongoing schism by the time of the erection of the stele, would probably not have met the acceptance of the Tang imperial court nor had it contended a vast portion of the Christian Iranian and Central Asian community in China, some of whom may still have harboured fond memories of the Sassanian past before the Muslim conquest, and some of whom came from a region where there was substantial resistance to the central Abbasid power in Baghdad at the time. The fact that no patriarch had been elected after the death of Henanisho, or that the one elected and recognised by the caliph, Timothy I., was not acknowledged by a strong party inside the Chinese church especially in the Central Asian regions, may have triggered or at least encouraged the "authors" of the stele to put down the name of a patriarch who was already dead at the time of the erection of the stone slab instead of a successor that may not have been fully recognised outside of the sphere of influence of the Abbasid caliphate, and by a community whose loyalty, inside of China, had to be with the Tang empire, and who outside of China was rather linked to the North-eastern Iranian places from where they themselves or their families had hailed than to the Church's centre in the heart of the Abbasid caliphate.

[23] BUDGE 1893, 383ff., note 3. One could speculate if the harsh criticism of Joseph's sodomy in the sources does not reflect a slightly different situation: that Joseph actually defected to the party of Al-Muqanna' who had a religious orientation which was detested both by the Church and by the Abbasid caliphate.

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Beth Sinaye: A Typical East Syrian Ecclesiastical Province?

David WILMSHURST
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Introduction

Christian missionaries of the Church of the East—the so-called 'Nestorian Church'—were active in China for more than two centuries during the Tang dynasty (618–907). This mission is rarely mentioned in the surviving literary texts of the Church of the East, which focus principally on its heartland in northern Iraq, and until the seventeenth century European Christians had no idea that Persian and Iraqi missionaries had been working in China centuries before the arrival of their earliest European counterparts. In 1625 perspectives were dramatically altered by the discovery of the 'Nestorian Stele' in the Chinese city of Xi'an (formerly the Chinese capital Chang'an). The stele, originally erected in 781 by Nestorian Christians living in Chang'an, detailed the history of a Nestorian Christian mission to China launched nearly one and a half centuries earlier.[1] Further discoveries during the past three centuries, especially the finds of Christian texts in Chinese from Dunhuang and elsewhere at the beginning of the twentieth century, have substantiated the evidence of the 'Nestorian Stele' and shed further light on the Nestorian mission to Tang China.

Nevertheless, evidence for this mission remains scanty, and its significance has been hotly debated between sceptics and romantics. Two basic problems of interpretation remain unresolved. How large and how important was the Nestorian mission in China? And to what extent were its Christian teachings modified in response to the influence of Buddhism and Taoism? Sceptics are reluctant to place more weight on the evidence than it will bear, and tend to downplay the importance of the Nestorian mission to China. Romantics have made extravagant claims for its success, and have also argued that the Nestorians preached a syncretic mixture of Buddhism and Christianity. Agreement between the two camps remains elusive.

This paper addresses these problems of interpretation. It will argue that most previous studies, by focusing primarily on the evidence from China itself instead of evaluating the Nestorian mission in Tang China as one of several such endeavors in the Nestorian 'provinces of the exterior', have failed to place it in

[1] CAMERON-BARBARIANS-MANDARINS 1989, 18–19.

its proper context. It will highlight the often overlooked 'view from Iraq', and consider how far the metropolitan province of Beth Sinaye was a typical exterior province of the Church of the East.

The Nestorian Mission to Tang China

The Church of the East is perhaps best known nowadays for its missionary work in China during the Tang dynasty. The Nestorian mission to China has long fascinated scholars of a romantic temperament, and much has been made of the fact that Christian monks from Iraq and Persia brought the Christian message to the Chinese capital Chang'an nearly a thousand years before the first Jesuit missionaries arrived in the country. In fact, it is not surprising to find Nestorian Christians in Chang'an in the early decades of the seventh century. Trade along the Silk Road was flourishing, and Chang'an, their destination, was the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the world, and was used to dealing with foreigners. Many of its Chinese inhabitants were Buddhists, but the city was a magnet for foreign traders, and by the eighth century had small but significant Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Manichean and Hindu communities. As in modern Hong Kong, Buddhist temples jostled for space with mosques, churches, synagogues and other more exotic places of worship.

The principal source for the Nestorian mission to Tang China is the 'Nestorian Stele', a tablet erected in 781 in the grounds of a Nestorian monastery in the Chang'an by its monks. This two-ton marble tablet bore a long inscription in Chinese, with occasional glosses in Syriac, describing the eventful progress of a Christian mission to 'the rulers of the Chinese' launched one and a half centuries earlier by a Nestorian missionary with the Chinese name Alopen [Aluoben]. Alopen was received in the Chinese capital in 635 by Fang Xuanling, one of the closest aides of the emperor Taizong (599–649), so his mission must have been carefully prepared.[2]

The emperor's advisers read what A-lo-pen had to say about the Christian faith and granted Christianity their seal of approval in an imperial decree of 638, preserved in the *Tang huiyao*, a collection of such decrees, and also quoted in the Nestorian Stele inscription. 'Truth can be recognized, whatever its name: wisdom can be discerned, whoever its possessor,' ran the preamble to this decree. Alopen was given permission to open a monastery for twenty-one monks in Chang'an's I-ning [Yining] ward, on a prime piece of real estate close to the center of the Chinese capital.[3] At some point in the reign of Taizong's successor Gaozong, Alopen was made a bishop.[4]

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2 MOULE 1930, 38.

3 Ibid., 39 and 65.

4 Ibid., 40.

During the reign of the empress Wu Zetian (690–704), a committed Buddhist, there was a reaction against the Christian presence in Chang'an, and Alopen's monastery may have been closed for a few months. There was another brief period of unpleasantness during the second reign of the emperor Ruizong (710–12). These two persecutions are recorded in the Nestorian Stele inscription:

> In the *Sheng-li* years [698–99] the Buddhists arrogantly criticised us in the Eastern Chou [5]: at the end of *Hsien-t'ien* [6] the inferior scholars, puffed up with their own importance, attacked us bitterly in the Western Hao. But the chief monk Lo-han [7] and the bishop Chi-lieb, [8] both noble men from the West, dedicated to spiritual values, came to our aid. They supported together the mystic cord and joined in tying the broken knot. The devout emperor Hsuan-tsung [9] ordered the prince of Ning-kuo [10] and the four other princes to go in person to our blessed monastery to rebuild the altars and courts. The beam of our religion had been weak for a moment, but was once more raised; the stone of our way had been thrown down for a time, but once again stood upright. [11]

The text uses allusive language: the Eastern Chou and the Western Hao are allusions to the dynasties of the empress Wu and the emperor Jui-tsung, based respectively in Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang; while the term 'inferior scholars' [*Xiashi*] was used by the Taoists to describe their opponents. Here, it is turned ironically against them. The text suggests that the Christian monasteries were attacked and pillaged, but does not mention any loss of life.

The Nestorians recovered from these attacks, and during the reign of the celebrated emperor Xuanzong (714–56) they enjoyed several decades of prosperity. A number of Nestorian bishops were sent to China during this period, some travelling overland along the Silk Road and others entering China via Canton. [12] The patriarch Sliba-zkha (714–28) is known to have created a metropolitan province for China, implying that it was governed by a metropolitan bishop (archbishop) who had several suffragan bishops under his control. [13] The province of China was called Beth Sinaye in Syriac, though the Persian Christians who dominated the Nestorian missions to the East also called it Sinistan, the Persian form of the name. [14]

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5 [Zhou].
6 [Xiantian 712].
7 [Luohan].
8 [Jilie].
9 [Xuanzong].
10 [Ning guo].
11 MOULE 1930, 40–41.
12 Ibid., 40–42 and 65–66.
13 MAI 1825-38, *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio*, x. 141; MOULE 1930, 20.
14 MOULE 1930, 35.

In 745, doubtless because the Tang court was now better informed about the various Western religions whose missionaries had set up their stalls in China during the previous century, the Christians were given a new official identity. Hitherto, Christianity had been known as 'the Persian teaching of the scriptures' *(Po-ssu ching-chiao [Bosi Jiao])*, and Nestorian monasteries were called 'Persian monasteries' *(Po-ssu ssu [Bosi Si])*. But there were Zoroastrians in China too, who had a far better claim to a Persian identity than the Christians. Christianity had in fact been founded not in Persia but in Ta-ch'in ([Daqin], the Chinese term for Syria and Palestine), so Xuanzong instructed the Christians to rename their buildings 'Syrian monasteries' *(Ta-ch'in ssu [Daqin Si])*. The text of the imperial decree ordering this change has survived:

> The ninth month of the fourth year of the *T'ien-pao* period. The Persian 'teaching of the scriptures' (*ching-chiao*[15]) originated in Syria (*Ta-ch'in*[16]). Long ago this teaching was brought here and has been practised in China. When the monasteries were first built, we called them 'Persian monasteries' (*Po-ssu ssu*[17]). In order that the true origin of these so-called 'Persian monasteries' may be known, the monasteries in the two capitals are to be re-named 'Syrian monasteries' (*Ta-ch'in ssu*[18]). The same change is to apply to the monasteries in other prefectures and districts.[19]

According to the Nestorian Stele inscription, a motto was composed for the Chang'an monastery by the emperor Xuanzong 'at the beginning of *T'ien-pao* [Tianbao]', which was displayed at the monastery's entrance in a facsimile of his handwriting.[20] These two references almost certainly refer to a single process. It is possible that the emperor's 'motto' for the Chang|an monastery simply consisted of the three words *Ta-ch'in ssu* [Daqin Si]. Even if it was longer and more flowery, it will still have mentioned the emperor's new name for the Christian monasteries in China.

Probably at the same time, and certainly before 781, the Christians dropped the colorless term 'teaching of the scriptures' and began calling Christianity 'the brilliant teaching of Syria' [*Daqin Jingjiao*]. This was a much more striking name, and they underlined the attractions of their new corporate identity by adopting an unusual and eye-catching variant of the Chinese character *Jing*, 'brilliant'.[21]

The Nestorian metropolitan province of China (Beth Sinaye) enjoyed several decades of prosperity around the end of the eighth century. The Nestorian Stele

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15 [Jingjiao].
16 [Daqin].
17 [Bosi Si].
18 [Daqin Si].
19 Cf. MOULE 1930, 67.
20 Ibid., 41–42.
21 WILMSHURST 1993 44–74.

inscription preserves the record of the Nestorian Church in China at the height of its prosperity. The tablet, an expensive gesture of piety, was commissioned by Yazdbuzid, a Persian Christian with important connections at the Tang court. A number of flowery compliments were paid by the emperor Taizong (762–79) to the Christian community in Chang'an during the 770s, recorded in detail on the Nestorian Stele inscription.[22] These compliments should not be taken too seriously: similar flattering addresses were also made to the city's small Muslim community.

Disaster struck in the middle of the ninth century. In 845 the emperor Wuzong (845–46) ordered the expulsion of Zoroastrians and Christians from China, and though this order may have had little effect in the more remote parts of the country, it probably resulted in the closure of the Nestorian monasteries in Chang'an and Loyang and an end to the cozy relationships that the metropolitans of Beth Sinaye had established at the imperial court:

> Having looked into the teachings from the foreign lands in the empire, we have discovered that there are over 3,000 Ta-ch'in Mu-hu-fu monks (*Ta-ch'in Mu-hu-pu San-ch'in yu jen*[23]); and these monks also shall return to lay life. They shall not mingle and interfere with the manners and customs of China.[24]

Wuzong's decree offers the best context for the burial of the Xi'an Tablet. The expulsion was an act of state, and was probably preceded by an official notification. The Nestorian monks of Chang'an will therefore had enough time to bury the tablet in the grounds of Alopen's monastery in Chang'an before they left China. They may well have assumed that they would soon be back, but as far as is known they never returned to the Tang capital. There were also disasters elsewhere in China. In 877/8 an Arab traveller mentioned the slaughter of thousands of Christians in Canton [Guangzhou] after its capture by the rebel Huang Chao:

> Well-informed witnesses say that, besides the Chinese who were massacred, there also perished 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians and Parsees, who were living in the city and doing business there. A good estimate could be made of the death toll, because the Chinese levied a tax on these foreigners according to their number.[25]

The Nestorian mission in China probably never recovered from these two blows. It is probably significant that Beth Sinaye was omitted from a detailed list of 14 Nestorian metropolitan provinces and their suffragan dioceses compiled by the Nestorian archbishop Eliya of Damascus in 893.[26] It is difficult to believe that

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22 MOULE 1930, 42 and 46.

23 [Daqin muhu xian sanqian yu ren 大秦穆護,祆三千餘人].

24 MOULE 1930, 70.

25 Ibid., 76.

26 ASSEMANI 1719-28, *BO*, ii. 485–89.

such a senior member of the hierarchy of the Church of the East would have overlooked the province if it were still in existence at this period.

An abortive attempt was made towards the end of the tenth century to revive the Nestorian mission in China. In 987 the Christian writer Abu'lfaraj met a Nestorian monk in the Arabian city of Najran who had recently returned from China. He had been sent there seven years earlier with five companions by the patriarch 'Abdisho' I (963–86), to 'set in order the affairs of the Church'. According to this monk, 'Christianity was just extinct in China; the native Christians had perished in one way or another; the church which they had used had been destroyed; and there was only one Christian left in the land. Seeing that there was nobody left to whom his ministry could be of any use, this monk returned more quickly than he had set out'.[27] A few Christian graves have been discovered in China with dates from the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, but these are not evidence for the continuation of an organized Nestorian mission in the country. Almost everything, in fact, suggests precisely the opposite: that during the three centuries of the Song dynasty (960–1279) the Church of the East had no official presence in China. The Song emperors were far less receptive to outside influences than their Tang predecessors, and far less welcoming to foreigners.

The Size and Significance of the Nestorian Mission

There are two major problems of interpretation. Firstly, how large, and how important, was the Nestorian mission in Tang China? This is one of the most important bones of contention between the sceptics and the romantics, and the issue is admirably dramatised by two contradictory texts from around the end of the eighth century, one Christian and the other Chinese. The first text is taken from the Nestorian Stele inscription. During the reign of the emperor Gaozong (649–83), it is claimed, Christianity spread 'throughout the ten provinces' and monasteries could be found 'in a hundred cities' in China:

> The brilliant teaching spread through the ten provinces and the kingdom enjoyed great prosperity. Monasteries occupied a hundred cities, and the people enjoyed brilliant happiness.[28]

By contrast, a Chinese Buddhist inscription of 824 boasted that there were more Buddhist temples in a single Chinese town than the total number of churches, fire temples and other foreign places of worship in the whole of China:

> Among the different foreigners who have come to China there are the Manicheans, the Christians (*Ta-ch'in*[29]) and the Zoroastrians. All the monasteries of these sorts

[27] MOULE 1930, 75–76.
[28] Ibid., 40.

> of foreigners in the empire together are not enough to equal the number of Buddhist monasteries in one small city.[30]

Romantics are inclined to quote the first of these texts, sceptics the second. There are good grounds for believing that the second of these two assessments is far closer to the truth than the first.

It is at this point that the 'view from Iraq' can usefully be invoked. By studying the organization of the Church of the East in the eighth century, we will be better able to assess its organization in China. In 790 the patriarch Timothy I reorganized the metropolitan provinces of the Church of the East, dividing them into two distinct categories: the 'provinces of the interior' and 'provinces of the exterior'. The metropolitans of the 'interior' provinces, those provinces close to the patriarchal throne of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, would henceforth constitute the electoral college. The metropolitans of the 'exterior' provinces, mostly in Central Asia, were disenfranchised but compensated by being given greater autonomy in their own provinces. The six 'provinces of the interior' consisted of the five traditional Mesopotamian provinces (Elam, Nisibis, Maishan, Adiabene and Beth Garmai) established at the synod of Isaac in 410, and neighboring Hulwan, a province created in the sixth century.[31]

There were ten other Nestorian metropolitan provinces definitely in existence in 790, and they were classed as 'exterior' provinces. The provinces in question were Fars, Merv, Herat, Rai, Armenia, Barda'a, Samarqand, India, China and Damascus.[32] Timothy announced his intention of making Tibet (Syriac: Beth Tuptaye) a metropolitan province also, but there is no evidence that he ever did so.[33] The 'metropolitans of the exterior' lost their right to take part in patriarchal elections, but were compensated by being permitted to consecrate suffragan bishops without reference to the patriarch. In the middle of the ninth century the patriarch Theodosius (853–58) took these reforms a step further. The metropolitans of the 'interior provinces' were obliged to attend the election of a patriarch, and were also required to report in person to the patriarch every four years. The metropolitans of the ten 'exterior' provinces were merely required to submit a written report from their province every six years.

In Timothy's day a metropolitan province typically had between six and twelve suffragan dioceses, and there is no reason to suppose that the province of China (Beth Sinaye) was any exception to this general rule. What little is known about

29 [Daqin].

30 MOULE 1930, 69–70.

31 FIEY 1993, 59–60 (Maishan), 63–64 (Beth Garmai), 78–80 (Adiabene), 83–85 (Elam), 92–93 (Hulwan) and 116–18 (Nisibis).

32 Ibid., 47–48 (Armenia), 58–59 (Barda'a), 72 (Damascus), 89 (Herat), 94–96 (India), 105 (China), 110–11 (Merv), 124 (Rai), 124–25 (Fars) and 128 (Samarqand).

33 DAUVILLIER 1948, 291–96; FIEY 1993, 139 (Tibet).

the province of Beth Sinaye suggests that it conformed to type. During the lifetime of the missionary Alopen, China seems merely to have had a single diocese, presumably at Chang'an. According to the fourteenth-century Nestorian polymath 'Abdisho' of Nisibis, the metropolitan province of Beth Sinaye was created by the patriarch Sliba-zkha (714–28).[34] In the same passage, 'Abdisho' of Nisibis mentions that Sliba-zkha also created metropolitan provinces for Herat and Samarqand, and that Herat was created first, Beth Sinaye second, and Samarqand third. This testimony is convincing. Nestorian missionaries crossed the Oxus river and began working in Central Asia in the seventh century, and they are known to have been active not only in China but also in various other localities along the Silk Road. By creating these three new metropolitan provinces, Sliba-zkha was surely trying to link up the various Nestorian communities beyond the Oxus River.

The evidence from China also suggests that the Nestorian province of Beth Sinaye was organized along classic lines, with a metropolitan bishop and around half a dozen suffragan bishops. The Nestorian Stele inscription, written in 781, just over half a century after China first became a metropolitan province, was composed by Adam, 'priest, bishop and *papash* of Sinistan'.[35] The word *papash*, 'father', is unusual, but most scholars have assumed, probably correctly, that Adam was the metropolitan bishop of Beth Sinaye. The inscription also mentions the bishop Yohannan, the 'country-bishops' Yazdbuzid and Sargis, the archdeacon Gabriel, 'head of the church of Khumdan [Chang'an] and Sarag [Loyang]', and the archdeacon Gigoi of Khumdan.[36] These references confirm that the Nestorian Church in China had a conventional episcopal hierarchy at the end of the eighth century, with a metropolitan bishop at its head and bishops and archdeacons in both northern capitals. No doubt there were a few bishops in other parts of China as well, and their locations can be deduced with a reasonable degree of confidence.

The evidence for the areas of Nestorian settlement in Tang China consists of surviving Christian tombstones and stray references in Chinese gazetteers and other literary sources. Only about a dozen Christian settlements in Tang China can be confirmed, and they are where they might reasonably be expected to be: along the Silk Road, in the two northern capitals of Chang'an and Loyang, and in the main southern seaports. A second monastery was built in Chang'an during Gaozong's reign, sponsored by the Persian prince Piroz, who had taken refuge in China after the collapse of the Sassanian Empire.[37] There was also a monastery in Loyang, China's second city, mentioned in Xuanzong's decree of

[34] MAI 1825-38, 141; MOULE 1930, 20.
[35] MOULE 1930,35.
[36] Ibid., 48–51.
[37] Ibid., 71.

745.[38] There were also monasteries or churches in the Silk Road station of Dunhuang near Shazhou and in a number of towns in Ningxia province (modern Kansu) on the main road to Chang'an.[39] The southern coastal port of Canton certainly had a Christian merchant community, many of whose members were killed in 877/8.[40] There were probably also Christians in the Fukienese port of Quanzhou, though no source specifically mentions them.[41] Christians in Tang China probably numbered a few thousand at most. It is unlikely that there were many Christian communities in central China, and the only inland Chinese city south of the Yellow River where a Nestorian presence can be confirmed in the Tang dynasty is Chengdu.[42] Canton and Quanzhou probably both had Nestorian bishops.

It is clear that the Nestorians of Beth Sinaye were fully integrated into the hierarchy of the Church of the East in 781. The Nestorian Stele inscription, ascribed to February 781, contains a conventional Syriac dating formula:

> In the days of the father of fathers Mar Hnanisho' catholicus patriarch.[43]

Intriguingly, this dating formula mentions the patriarch Hnanisho' II (773–80), who had died almost a year earlier, and not the reigning patriarch Timothy I (780–823), who had taken office in May 780. Several scholars have suggested explanations for this apparent anomaly. Timothy's election was bitterly disputed, and resulted in a schism in the Church of the East that lasted for several months.[44] It is possible that the Nestorian community in Chang'an may have played safe during this period of uncertainty by dating the erection of the tablet to the reign of Timothy's predecessor. A perhaps more likely explanation, however, is that the text for such an elaborate commission as the Nestorian Stele was submitted several months in advance, in the summer of 780, and that the news of Timothy's election had not yet reached the Nestorians of Chang'an by that date. In this context, it is interesting to note that, according to Mari's twelfth-century history of the Nestorian patriarchs, Hnanisho' II was murdered. He underwent an operation for some minor ailment, and one of his enemies bribed the doctor to use a poisoned scalpel, thereby procuring his death.[45] If this story is true, and it is fairly typical of the ecclesiastical politics of the Church of the East at this period, his sudden death would have taken everybody by surprise.

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38 Ibid., 67.
39 Ibid., 42 and 52–64.
40 Ibid., 76.
41 Ibid., 79–80.
42 Ibid., 71–72.
43 Ibid., 47.
44 MARI (ed. GISMONDI) 1899, 71–73 (Arabic), 63–64 (Latin).
45 Ibid., 71 (Arabic), 63 (Latin).

A further indication of close ties between the Nestorian Church in Iraq and its outposts in China at the end of the eighth century comes from a chance remark by the patriarch Timothy I. Around 790 Timothy consecrated a monk named Hnanisho' metropolitan for the city of Sarbaz in southeast Segestan. Hnanisho' disregarded Timothy's instructions to proceed incognito to his province and made a conspicuous entry in his metropolitan robes into the cities of Basra and Ubullah in southern Iraq, causing great offence to the local Muslim population. Timothy wrote to urge him to be more discreet: 'You should follow the example of the monks who go to India and China on foot, carrying only a Bible and a knapsack.' This casual allusion suggests that travel between Iraq and China was unremarkable, and that Nestorian monks from Iraq routinely made this journey. A reference from roughly the same period in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian also indicates that China, while distant from Iraq, was by no means inaccessible. In his account of the election of the Jacobite counter-patriarch David of Dara in 762, Michael described how the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mansur (754–75), after deposing and imprisoning the Jacobite patriarch Giwargis I (758–90), summoned the Jacobite bishops to court and invited them to appoint a more pliant patriarch. They initially refused to do so:

> Then the king threatened to banish them to China. And so, terrified, they nominated David as their head.[46]

Had they continued to defy the caliph, the Nestorian missionaries in Tang China might soon have found themselves facing serious competition from their Jacobite rivals. As it is, no evidence has yet been found to suggest that any other Christian Churches had a significant institutional presence in China at this period. A few Jacobite merchants may have lived in some the larger cities, and perhaps the occasional monk sought a retreat in the Chinese countryside, where he need never hear the Islamic call to prayer, but it is most unlikely that the Jacobite Church ever sent bishops to China. Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus were both aware of the Nestorian mission to Tang China, and would surely have mentioned any serious competition from the Jacobites. Their silence on this point is surely decisive.

Perhaps the most interesting testimony from Iraq on the activities of the Nestorians in China comes from the *Book of Governors*, an ecclesiastical history of the Nestorian monastery of Beth 'Abe in northern Iraq written around 840 by Thomas of Marga, one of its monks. In a famous passage in this work, Thomas boasted that 42 monks had left the monastery during his own lifetime to become bishops, metropolitans or even patriarchs. One of them was a monk named David, who became metropolitan of Beth Sinaye during the reign of the patriarch Timothy I (780–823). His disciple Peter accompanied him to China, probably as a suffragan bishop. According to Thomas, Peter later became bishop of the

[46] MICHAEL THE SYRIAN, *Chronicle* (ed. CHABOT 1899-1924), ii. 528.

Arabian diocese of Yemen and Sana'a during the reign of the patriarch Abraham II (837–50).[47] This is a striking testimony to the geographical extension of the Church of the East in the 'Abbasid period, and is all the more impressive because Thomas was not seeking to create an effect. No other Church in the world had dioceses so far apart at this period. The implication is that career postings between China and Arabia, although perhaps uncommon, were not remarkable.

There is therefore no reason to suppose that the Nestorian mission in China was special. The province of Beth Sinaye seems to have been organized as a standard Nestorian metropolitan province of the exterior, with a metropolitan bishop and at most a dozen suffragan bishops. There were probably fewer than 10,000 Christians in Tang China, and they were concentrated in the two northern capitals, in the southern seaports, and in the northern borderlands of China. Travel between Iraq and China was perfectly possible, and a bishop could be posted to and from China during his career without such a posting arousing undue comment.

Purists versus Syncretists

It is sometimes claimed that the Nestorian missionaries in Tang China were infected by Buddhist and Taoist teachings, and modified their Christianity in response to these alien influences. At first sight, the notion is attractive. To cite just one possible example of syncretism, the University of Hong Kong has a collection of nearly a thousand fourteenth-century Nestorian crosses from the northern Chinese borderlands, from the Christian Ongut tribe, acquired during the 1920s by a British postal official working in that part of China. Although their designs vary, Maltese crosses with a square central panel displaying a swastika are common.[48] This use of a Buddhist symbol on a Christian emblem has been hailed in some quarters as evidence of syncretism, as though the Ongut were not quite sure whether they were Christians or Buddhists. Since several fourteenth-century literary texts insist that the Ongut were Christians, it seems reasonable to conclude that they did not suffer from schizophrenia, and used the swastika in combination with the cross simply because in China it was a symbol of good fortune.

Claims for syncretism at an earlier date spring from a misunderstanding of a number of surviving Chinese Christian texts from the Tang period. In the early years of the twentieth century a number of Nestorian devotional texts were recovered from the sands of Dunhuang and other stations along the Silk Road. Most of these texts are still only available in English in a turgid translation made in the 1930s by the Japanese scholar Yoshiro Saeki, and this has not improved their readability. Some mystics have professed to find one of these texts,

47 BUDGE 1893, ii. 447–48; MOULE 1930, 75.

48 DRAKE 1962, 11–25.

the so-called *Book of Praise*, edifying. In fact, they are all exactly what might have been expected in such a context. They are workmanlike, slightly pedestrian expositions of the Christian faith, marred by the poor quality of the Chinese in which they were written. Their main attraction for the scholar is that they illuminate the problems faced by the early Christian missionaries in China in translating their doctrines into the language of an alien culture. In the earliest text from China, probably to be dated to 641, the Nestorians used the Chinese proper name *Fo*, 'Buddha', for God, and *liang feng*, 'cool wind', for the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, the so-called Buddhist or Taoist 'influences' which appear in the Nestorian texts from Dunhuang are, in my view, illusory. They simply reflect the struggle faced by the early Christian missionaries to hammer out a flexible vocabulary in Chinese with which to convey a distinctly Christian theology. The Nestorians were at first forced to rely on Buddhist and Taoist phraseology because it was the only vocabulary available for expressing religious concepts. But they soon realized that these terms conveyed the wrong impression, and dropped them. During the eighth century they gradually developed their own religious vocabulary, with considerable success. By 781, as we know from the text of the Nestorian Stele, they were directly transliterating the Syriac names for God *(Allaha)*, Christ *(Mshiha)*, and the Holy Spirit *(Ruha d'qudsha)* into Chinese. The Chinese term they eventually coined for the Trinity, *san-yi miao-shen*, 'the mysterious union of three persons', would have passed muster with the most carping Jacobite theologian.

There is also evidence from both Christian and Chinese sources that syncretism was not in fashion in late-eighth-century Chang'an. A passage from the Nestorian Stele inscription, praising the numerous benefactions of the Nestorian priest Yazdbuzid, makes it clear that the Christians regarded the Buddhists as rivals, and consciously competed with them:

> He invites the hungry to come, and he feeds them. He invites the cold to come, and he clothes them. He heals the sick, and raises them up. He buries the dead, and lays them to rest. The Buddhists pride themselves on their purity, but their finest deeds cannot rival the merit of this white-robed priest of the brilliant teaching.[49]

A curious story has also been preserved in a Chinese source of a literary collaboration between the Nestorian metropolitan Adam, who supervised the erection of the Nestorian stele in 781, and a Buddhist scholar of his acquaintance. The story shows that at least one Chinese emperor, Dezong (779–805), was also hostile to any manifestations of syncretism. In 782 Adam worked with Prajna, a Buddhist monk who had just arrived in China from India, on a translation of a Buddhist sutra from Uighur into Chinese. Prajna knew little

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49 MOULE 1930, 45.

Uighur and no Chinese, while Adam had only the vaguest idea of Buddhist teachings. Adam, who went under the Chinese name Ching-ching [Jing Jing], must have been the main translator, and unwisely introduced into his text a number of Chinese expressions that had acquired a distinct Christian colouring. The translators presented the fruits of their labours to the emperor Dezong, expecting praise. 'But the emperor was not fooled at all. He was a shrewd man and a fine scholar, and had a great respect for the Shakya canon. He examined their translation and found that they had muddled the author's thought and obscured the clarity of his language.' The result was a stinging rebuke, delivered publicly in the form of an imperial decree, to both Adam and his Buddhist collaborator:

> The Shakya monastery and the Ta-ch'in[50] monastery have different customs and conflicting religious beliefs. Let Ching-ching[51] hand down the teachings of Christ, and the Shakya monks publish the scriptures of Buddha. The boundaries of the two doctrines must be kept distinct, and their followers must not intermingle. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are two different things: the King and Wei rivers flow in two different courses.[52]

Such texts, which seriously undermine the case of the syncretists, need to be taken into account in any interpretation of the Nestorian mission to Tang China.

Conclusion

The Nestorian Christians in eighth-century Chang'an were a small, mildly exotic presence in one of the world's most colorful and cosmopolitan cities. Their mission was organized as a typical 'exterior' province of the Church of the East, headed by a metropolitan with several suffragan bishops under his authority, and its ranks were reinforced from time to time with new blood from Iraq. There is no reason to suppose that the Christian message preached by the Nestorians in Tang China was contaminated by Buddhist or Taoist ideas, even though the Nestorians were forced to use terms in Chinese that had been coloured by Buddhist and Taoist usage.

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50 [Daqin].

51 [Jing Jing].

52 MOULE 1930, 68–69.

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'Eunuchs for the Kingdom of God': Rethinking the Christian-Buddhist Imperial Translation Incident of 787

R. Todd GODWIN
SOAS University of London

In 1896 Japanese scholar Junjirō Takakusu 高楠順次郎 published in English, and in the then highly influential journal *T'oung Pao*, a short article, or scholarly note, showing that the Church of the East Metropolitan Jing Jing 景淨 /Adam ܐܕܡ worked together with Buddhist master Prajna 般若 on the translation of a Buddhist scripture and presented it to Emperor De Zong 德宗 (r. 780-805) in the year 787.[1] Though it was an important discovery in its day, one deserving continued exploration, Takakusu was preoccupied with late nineteenth century's concerns in his short analysis of the incident. The incident was for him simply more evidence proving that Christians were indeed present in China during the Tang period, and that the then long-running debate over whether or not the Xi'an stele was a Jesuit forgery could now finally be laid to rest.[2] He ends his note more presciently, however, by suggesting that an investigation of the sutra which Prajna and Jing Jing worked on together and the context in which this occurred may have wider implications, and may aid, as he writes, "the student of the Syro-Chinese inscription," i.e. the Xi'an stele.

Since Takakusu's day, of course, many new texts and pieces of epigraphy stemming from and related to the Church of the East's presence in Tang-China have come to light, which confirm its existence there.[3] However unaware of these newer data, Takakusu may have been or he was right in saying that an investigation of the sutra that Adam and Prajna worked on together in 787, along with its context, revealed important things about the community connected to the Church of the East's famous Xi'an stele put in place in 781. This is especially true in connection to a set of themes consistently found within the newly discovered data: the Church of the East's connection to the late Tang

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1 TAKAKUSU 1896. Takakusu was also one of the two editors involved in publishing the eighty-five volumes of the *Taishō Tripiṭaka*, a documentary collection which was a major facilitator of the contemporary study of East Asian Buddhism (*Triptaka* means "Buddhist canon," and Taishō is an era of Japanese history, i.e. 1912-26).

2 TAKAKUSU 1896, 591.

3 SAEKI 1951. TANG 2009, 109 ff.

military, its connection to the Tang court's eunuch generals, and the shared connection each of these groups had developed to Esoteric Buddhism in the late Tang Empire following the An Lushan Rebellion (755-763). The scripture Adam and Prajna worked on together was, importantly, a *Mijiao* 密教 (Esoteric) Buddhist text:[4] the *Dacheng Liqiu Liu Boluomiduo jing* 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經 [Sutra of the Six Mahayana Paramitas], as we are informed of by Esoteric School monk Yuan Zhao 圓照 (712-794) in his work the, *Zhenyuan Shijiao lu* 真元釋教錄 [Buddhist Record of the Zhenyuan Period], written after the event, and the author and text from which Takakusu learned of the incident.[5] As recent research by Japanese and Chinese researchers has shown, a "convergence," of sorts, was taking place in the late eighth century within Tang politics, one which led to the translation incident.[6] This convergence in which the decision to produce the text and participate in its translation occurred included Esoteric Buddhists, the Tang court's eunuch military leaders, and foreign fighters living on the edge of the Tang Empire with military and commercial experience in Central Asia useful to the Tang court. The Church of the East was linked to this latter group, but eventually came to be linked to each of them.[7] Examining this confluence of forces and asking how it led to the translation incident of 787 sheds light on the political context of the Xi'an monument of 781, and in particular the Church of the East's long-standing connection to the Tang court, and the church's constitution as an imperial and inter-courtly social body.[8] In order to begin supporting this claim it is first necessary to note that the text Adam and Prajna translated in 787 did not survive, and it is thus not possible to examine its contents in order to better understand why this meeting took place, as Taka-

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4 For a useful introduction to Esoteric Buddhism, see ELVERSKOG 2010, 35-9. He suggests that the rise in the notion of "grace" (this author's term) found outside of institutions and an easily accessible savior soteriology, as seen in Pure Land and Chan Buddhism, was accompanied by a move towards patronage culture and accommodation to the hierarchical structures of imperial courts in the cultures of north India and China at the same time, something later developing into Tantrism. He points continually to the imperial and courtly dimensions of Esoteric Buddhism, noting that the Sanskrit term *mandala* referred originally to an administrative unit within an empire, and that the more familiar use of the term, referring to meditation technologies, arose together with the notion of a god-king at the center of a Buddhist polity turning the wheel of Dharma within an imperial setting; for another helpful definition of the term Esoteric/Tantric Buddhism, see WEINSTEIN 1987, 54.

5 *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, Vol. 55, No. 2157; the text can be found online at: http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/zh-cn/T55n2157-017 , retrieved 10-12-2013.

6 CHEN 2006, 93-113; idem. 2009, 195-213; NAKATA 2011, 156-175; TSUKAMOTO 1975, 251-84; the term "convergence" is the author's own; quotation marks are used to express its inadequacy and need of refinement.

7 See the references to Yisi in the Xi'an stele, a priest and Central Asian military leader who is very likely tied to the militants who came to Tang-China in order to help put down the An Lushan Rebellion: LEGGE 1966, 20-25; on foreign fighters in the Tang, the An Lushan Rebellion, and their primary source references, see INABA 2010, 36-61.

8 For a fuller investigation of these themes, see GODWIN, 2014.

kusu suggests. Though the text was translated again later, and this time directly from Sanskrit to Chinese and without the Iranian language intermediary, this is not the same text.[9] It is a similar text however, and one that is three sections longer than the first one. Section seven of the newer text contains a list of prayers, or dharanis, to be said by the sovereign in order to offer protection for his kingdom. Emperor Dezong wrote the preface to the retranslated text, an indication of his support for use of Esoteric Buddhism to create order and stability not only in the world of Esoteric Buddhist ritual, but also in the late Tang Empire.[10] The phrase 往護其國 *wang hu qi guo*, i.e. "in order to protect his country", is found repeated in this text, as well as in another Pranjaparamita text called *Renwang Huguo Banruo Boluomiduo Jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經 [Prajnaparamita Sutra for a Humane King to Protect His County], translated by Prajna in the following years.[11] The *Sutra of the Six Mahayana Paramitas* which Adam and Prajna worked on together is part of this family of interrelated texts, many of which appear to have been put to ideological uses within the imperial courts of Middle China and the Buddhist polities from which these text came originally, a broader topic which extends beyond the bounds of the current paper.

In order to begin moving deeper into this set of connections and the precise social dynamics which led to the plan to translate the text, it is first necessary to pay close attention to the *Zhenyuan Shijiao Lu* penned by Yuan Zhao after the event. While it is impossible to rescue Adam and the translation incident completely from the negative light into which Yuan Zhao puts it, Yuan Zhao's portrayal of the event and Prajna's arrival in China at the same time may be said to conceal as much as it reveals about the event and why it took place at all. What comes across in this portrayal, something not augmented by Takakusu in his translation of the excerpt from Yuan Zhao and thus carrying over into contemporary scholarship, is the shear futility of the translation effort, Emperor De Zong's strict Buddhist orthodoxy, and his no-nonsense attitude towards a Christian being involved in the translation of a Buddhist text, let alone an official one and done for the good of the empire.[12] For example, after relating that Esoteric monk Prajna was from Kapiśi, a polity located in contemporary northern Afghanistan, and that he had made a long and arduous sea journey to China because he heard that Manjuśri the Boddhisattva had appeared there, Yuan Zhao relates that:

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[9] *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, Vol. 8, No.0245; this text can be accessed online at http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T08n0246_001, retrieved 7-7-2013.

[10] Taisho Tripitaka Vol. 8, No. 261; *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 55: 590-1, and appearing online at: http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T08/0261_001.htm. Retrieved 4-1-2014.

[11] *Taisho Tripitaka* Vol. 33, No. 1709; Text can be found online at: http://www.cbeta.org/ result/normal/T33/1709_007.htm. (retrieved 4-1-2014); on the background of these texts see the important work by ORZECH 1998, 141-50, 191-201.

[12] WEINSTEIN 1987, 94-8.

東行半月方達廣州．洎建中三年屆于上國矣．至貞元二祀訪見鄉親．神策正將羅好心即般若三藏舅氏之子也．悲喜相慰將至家中．用展親親延留供養．好心既信重三寶請譯佛經．乃與大秦寺波斯僧景淨依胡本六波羅蜜經譯成七卷．時為般若不閑胡語復未解唐言．景淨不識梵文復未明釋教．雖稱傳譯未獲半珠．圖竊虛名匪為福利．錄表聞奏意望流行．聖上濬哲文明允恭釋典．察其所譯理昧詞疎．且夫釋氏伽藍大秦僧寺．居止既別行法全乖．景淨應傳彌尸訶教．沙門釋子弘闡佛經．欲使教法區分人無濫涉．正邪異類涇渭殊流．若網在綱有條不紊．天人攸仰四眾知歸．分命有司乃下制曰．中書門下牒．王希遷牒奉勅釋教深微．道俗虔敬．皆因梵本法被中華．宜令王希遷與所司精選有道行僧．就西明寺重更翻譯訖聞奏．牒至准勅故牒．

He arrived at Guangdong/Canton after half a month's travel. And in 782 (Jianzhong year 3), he sailed to the capital. He then met a relation of his in the year 786. The *Shencejun* General Luo Haoxin was the son of Prajna's uncle. After both the sorrows (of travel) and joys (of meeting) they comforted one another upon his arrival home. By using and extending the ties of those close to him, he extended his support network. Eunuch Luo Haoxin was close to, believed in, and held dear the three treasures (Buddhism) and invited him to translate a Buddhist sutra. And with the Persian monk Jingjing from Daqin temple, and by relying on foreign books, they translated the Mahayana Sutra on the Six Paramitas in seven volumes. At that point Prajna did not know the Iranian (Hu) language, nor did he know the language of the Tang. Jingjing did not know Sanskrit and did not understand the Buddhist teaching. Although they investigated the sutra, they could not obtain half its pearls. Thinking of stealing empty recognition and using fakery for their benefit, they presented a memorial (to the emperor), expecting to get it propagated. The emperor deeply knows civilized culture and is trustworthy and diligent with regards to the Buddhist scriptures. He examined how they had interpreted it, its principles, meanings and sections (and found things lacking). Moreover, the Sangha of the Buddha and the monastery of the Daqin differing much in their customs, and their religious practices being completely different, (so it was stated by the emperor that) Jing Jing should propagate the teaching of the Messiah, and the Buddhist monk should elucidate the Buddhist texts. He (the emperor) desired to make the teachings separate so that nobody would excessively relate them. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are different things and the rivers Jing and Wei have a different course.[13]

While it is impossible, as noted, to interpret the translation incident in anything but a negative manner, there are several important things that neither Yuanzhao nor Takakusu emphasize to readers about this event, and whose views are at points contradicted by information which is present within the passage itself.

[13] http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/zh-cn/T55n2157-017. This is the author's English translation, building in places upon Takakusu's version.

First is that Adam and Prajna were attempting to translate the Prajnaparamita sutra from Sanskrit first into an Iranian language (胡本 *hu ben*) and then into Chinese. Given the widespread and *lingua franca* nature of Sogdian in the region and period, and that Sogdians had been involved with translating Buddhist texts in this way for centuries, this language may have been Sogdian.[14] If the language had been Bactrian, this would also suggest a common language between the two translators and a shared knowledge of Esoteric Buddhist culture, given that Bactria and Kapiśi were then neighboring city-states; it would suggest the shared notions of statecraft endemic to Esoteric Buddhism in the region.[15] It is important to note that Prajna trusted Adam enough not only to undertake the project, but also then actually completed it with him, and then presented the results to Emperor De Zong according to plan. This seems hardly possible without a common language and culture, and without a high degree of trust and familiarity with one another, as perhaps yielded by the common network of relatives and expatriate business associates, as indicated by the passage.

A second thing not emphasized by either Yuan Zhao or Takakusu is the role of Tang courtly eunuchs with connections to the Tang military and royal palace within these developments, and as once again visible in this portion of the text.[16] Yuan Zhao's presentation of the events and what led up to it indicates that Prajna came to China by sea and through the port in Guangzhou/Canton and then made contact with relatives, one of whom was Luo Haoxin 羅好心 (737-793).[17] Luo was the highest ranking general in the army known as the *Shencejun* 神策軍, or "Army as Cunning as Spirits," and as a eunuch, he would have had access and close ties to the royal family and would have known the emperor since his childhood. Through his military connections to the frontier regions of the north east, he would have had a keen interest in the political and ideological possibilities inherent within Esoteric Buddhism to put the ailing Tang Empire back on track, and would not have been averse to involving the Church of the East in these plans.[18] As Yuan Zhao tells readers, it was Luo Haoxin who asked Prajna to translate the sutra, and was thus possibly the originator of the project. This suggests not only that Luo as well as Prajna had no difficulty with Adam and the Church of the East participating in the translation project, but also that both of them, along with Adam, would have been in favour of it—and as shall be shown below, would have had good reasons to be.

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14 WASHINGTON 2006, 1-64.

15 LITVINSKY 2010. "Buddhist States in Afghanistan and Central Asia," Encyclopedia Iranica Online. Retrieved 16-12-2013.

16 NAKATA 2011.

17 There is a biography of Luo Haoxin within the *Song Period Biographies of Famous Monks*, 宋高僧傳, contained also in *Taisho Tripitaka* Vol. 50, No. 2061, and accessible online at: http://www.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=T50n2061_p0716b14. Retrieved 16-12-2013.

18 DES ROTOURS 1974, 390.

Another eunuch mentioned in Yuan Zhao's description of these events and as he narrates them is a *Neiguan* 内官[palace functionary], named Wang Xiqian 王希遷 (dates uncertain).[19] This portion of the Zhenyuan record shows Wang being instrumental in orchestrating the placement of the new translation of the text within various branches of the government and military after it was retranslated by a team of translators and directly from Sanskrit to Chinese later. How did the Tang court's eunuchs, the late Tang military and Esoteric Buddhism become so interlinked with one another that the Church of the East would eventually find itself part of this set of connections as well?

Eunuchs known to have been part of Chinese politics and courtly life since the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC), were a feature within imperial courtly settings throughout the ancient and medieval world, and a phenomenon seen from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.[20] The *Zhou li* 周禮 [The Rites of the State of Zhou] indicates that the emperor in the state of Zhou, and on the eve of the unification of China that would come with the Han period (206 BC-220 AD), had within his court and household, one queen, three madams, nine concubines, twenty seven consorts, and eighty one ladies of duty within the inner court.[21] As there was constant competition among these women to give birth to a royal heir, eunuchs were employed both to guard and manage the affairs of the imperial household, eventually becoming important liaisons between levels of the court and government. In Tang-China (618-907) courtly eunuchs became an institution so integral to the structure and functioning of the court, military and government, that these structures and the Tang Empire itself cannot be understood without reference to the institution of eunuchs.[22] The number of courtly eunuchs reached three thousand during the period of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r.690-705).[23] While alone in having access to the imperial palace, eunuchs were also involved in running branches of the military. As they could serve as go-betweens between the emperor, the palace household, and the bureaucracy, eunuchs could shape imperial social policy because of the large range of classes they were in constant contact with. In periods when trust between the emperor, the bureaucracy, the aristocracy and the military broke down, and as was the case in the late 780s when *The Mahayana Sutra on the Six Paramitas* was translated, the court's eunuchs could aid an emperor in developing a style of personal rule until normalcy returned and the branches of govern-

[19] See the biographical information on Wang Xiqian in *Jiu Tang Shu* [Old Tang Records] at juan 144, and accessible online at: http://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hant/舊唐書/卷 144, as well that in the Song *Song Period Biographies of Famous Monks*, 宋高僧傳, contained also in *Taisho Tripitaka* Vol. 50, No. 2061, accessible online at: http://www.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead =T50n2061_p0716b21, retrieved 16-12-2013.

[20] DETTENHOFER 2009.

[21] op. cit., 71.

[22] LIU 1970, 116-54; Dalby, 1979, 571.

[23] *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 65:1131.

ment became more communicative with one another. Such was the case with Emperor De Zong in the late 780s. The Tang period's most distinctive feature is of course the *Anshi zhi luan* 安史之亂 [An Lushan Rebellion] occurring between 755 and 763, and the string of rebellions began by local war lord and former Tang general Zhu Ci 朱泚 in 781, referred to collectively as the *Zhuci zhi luan* 朱泚之亂 [Zhuci Rebellion].[24] The latter ended, importantly, only a year before the translation incident. At this time the Tang court's eunuchs were anything but the effete palace dwellers that one may, without better acquaintance, associate with the term eunuch. By then the Tang court eunuch's had become fierce military leaders, many of whom had become leading generals, who practiced martial arts, trained the majority of the Tang's fighting forces, were in charge of weaponry and horse and stable maintenance, and were often married, though they could not beget children.[25] The eunuchs proved that they were useful in protecting the emperor militarily several times during the chaotic three decades from the mid-750s to the mid and late 780s as the empire underwent numerous rebellions, invasions by Uighurs and Tibetans, resulting in the emperor and his retinue having to flee the capitol twice.[26] Each time the latter occurred and it occurred not only under eunuch protection, but also with the emperor being restored to the throne by eunuch generals. This had happened earlier in the century as well, as a eunuch named Gao Lishi 高力士 (d.762) secured the throne for Emperor Xuan Zong 玄宗 (r.712-756) and as a result was the first eunuch to be awarded the rank of a 3rd level minister.[27] As was the pattern in the late Tang period, Gao held positions both in the court and military simultaneously.

It was the An Lushan rebellion and Zhu Ci rebellions of the 750s to 780s, however, that gave the eunuchs their greatest opportunities. Li Fuguo 李輔国 (d.762) was part of Emperor Su Zong's (756-762) entourage, and was given a position to oversee a cavalry unit named the *Yuanshifu junsima* 元師府軍司馬 early in the An Lushan Rebellion.[28] Once he proved his usefulness to the court, he was given several positions in the government and military at once, eventually controlling the *Jinjun* 禁軍 [Palace Guard], and leading this unit successfully against a faction plotting to assassinate the empress. The *Shencejun* 神策軍 [Army as Cunning as Spirits], in des Rotour's rendering, a regiment that eunuchs would also eventually control in the post of An Lushan Rebellion in late Tang, and shown by Yuan Zhao as having connections to the Church of the East, would come to the fore in a similar way. Emperor Dai Zong 代宗 (762-779) fled to safe haven during the Tibetan occupation of the capitol in 776 and was

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24 PULLEYBLANK 1976.
25 LIU 1970, 116-54.
26 ibid.
27 *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 419: 517.
28 ibid.

protected by the *Shencejun*.[29] The *Shencejun* had been set up in 754 to guard the Tang Empire's northwestern border.[30] When its base was overrun by Tibetan forces, the unit was sent eastward; and with the start of the An Lushan rebellion it was enlisted for support in this effort. By 763 it was known as a strong and reliable force.[31] Emperor Dai Zong showed his gratitude by incorporating the unit into the palace guard, the *Jinjun*, and to the eunuchs, by establishing a eunuch named Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (722-770) as the unit's commander.[32]

It was in the latter part of the reign of Emperor De Zong and through the 780s that the connections between emperor, courtly eunuch generals and the "theocratic" Esoteric Buddhist tradition with its intrinsic connections between emperor, court and clergy, were forged, eventually leading to the Church of the East Metropolitan Adam's translating the *Mahyana Sutra on the Six Paramitas* with Esoteric master Prajna. When Emperor De Zong first came to the throne however, he attempted to control the influence of eunuchs within the government and military.[33] He was also much more favourable in the early part of his reign towards Taoism than Buddhism, and saw this as a way of returning the Tang Empire to what he saw as its native Chinese spiritual and political resources, and thus bringing the empire stability following the An Lushan Rebellion.[34] This was also seen as a way of reigning in the empire's still recalcitrant north-western frontier military rulers who were, though the rebellions of the previous three decades had finally been put down, giving only minimal allegiance to the Tang court, sometimes referring to themselves as kings.[35] Though the new string of rebellions of the early 780s began with eunuchs out of power and with young Emperor De Zong determined not to allow their influence at court and in the military, by the late 780s the eunuchs were back in power.[36] This occurred as the palace army leaders realized that without the aid of the eunuchs they could be not informed closely enough on the emperor's thoughts and movements.[37] Emperor De Zong had also lost trust in his military governors and bureaucrats as one after another betrayed him through the mid -80s.[38] Being forced to flee the capital after another Tibetan invasion was the last straw

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29 DALBY 1976, 573.

30 *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 216. This text is accessible online at: http://www.zwbk.org/MyLemmaShow.aspx?lid=161006. Retrieved 23-12-13. Cf. also *Zizhi Tongjian* 資治通鑑 221: 7455-60.

31 *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 72: 1294.

32 *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 72: 1294.

33 Weinstein 1987, 89-91 and *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 72: 1294 ff.

34 ibid.

35 ibid.

36 ibid.

37 ibid.

38 ibid.

in 784.[39] At this stage De Zong was a frightened man, as the sources describe him, and was willing to try new things, such as allocating military power within the *Shencejun* and making it his personal guard, as had been the case under Emperor Su Zong during the An Lushan and Zhuci rebellions, a policy De Zong vowed to not repeat, but was now forced to reconsider. Though De Zong divided the *Shencejun* into two halves in order to make it controllable, all the palace guards were now controlled by eunuchs.

The highly ritualistic and theocratic traditions of Esoteric Buddhism, developed within the courtly settings of northern India and Indian-influenced Central Asia in the first centuries of the Common Era, though having a place in the early Tang period too, found a more natural home in the late Tang court following the An Lushan and Zhuci rebellions.[40] This stands upon a line of development stemming back through the eighth century however. In the Kaiyuan 開元 period (713-741) and in the reign of Xuan Zong 玄宗 (r.712-756) the so-called Kaiyuan monasteries were established specifically as places where prayers for the emperor and Tang royal house would be offered by Buddhist monks, a task eventually overtaken by the Esoteric School.[41] The strong and independent military governors giving only a veneer of loyalty to the Tang house which developed after the An Lushan rebellion may have given patronage to the theocratic and ritualistic Esoteric schools making them a more salient feature within the Tang social landscape as this created competition between them and Tang ruling house for the allegiance of the empire's foreign fighter with links to the northeastern provinces. For foreigners residing in the Tang Empire with experience both in the Tang military, the culture of these local warlords, and the northeast frontier provinces, Esoteric Buddhism was part of a political language readily understood by the Church of the East, and one that would have brought the Tang court's eunuch generals, the foreign communities of the Tang, including the Church of the East into close proximity and would have given them common cause.

Esoteric Buddhist masters were garnering respected places at the Tang court even before the An Lushan and Zhuci rebellions, as seen in such figures as Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空 705-774).[42] He had a three day mourning festival declared for him by Emperor Dai Zong following the Buddhist master and court ritualist's death; for not only was it the case that, as Dalby writes, "Dai Zong was profoundly influenced by Bukong" and had a three day state-sponsored mourning festival declared for him following the court ritualist's death, a pat-

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39 ibid.

40 CHEN 2011, 287-93.

41 *Fo zu tong ji* 佛祖統紀 40. This text is accessible online at: http://www.cbeta.org /result/normal/ T49/2035_040.htm; Weinstein, 1987, 54.

42 ORZECH 1998, 141-50, 191-201.

tem was set in place partly by Bukong for interaction between Esoteric masters which extended through the reigns of the next two emperors.[43] Bukong's mixed Sogdian and Indian parentage, and his connections to extended family networks sustained across ethnic lines and as holders of knowledge and culture useful to regional courts, were undoubtedly part of this pattern.

Esoteric Buddhism also became part of inter-state relations as seen in the travel diary or Japanese Buddhist pilgrims and state envoys Ennin 圓仁 (793-864) and Kukai 空海 (774–835) and in the Tang's relations with its Central Asian neighbors simultaneously.[44] Late Tang Emperor Dai Zong (r.762-779), "profoundly" influenced by Esoteric master Bukong, was simply following a pattern seen with Su Zong (756-762), and continuing with De Zong (780-805) in receiving an Esoteric Buddhist initiation ritual, thus being made a disciple of an Esoteric Buddhist teacher. This began with Su Zong when Bukong was thought to have warded off an attack on capital by Uighur general Pugu Huai'en 僕固懷恩. The emperor was encouraged in this way of thinking by devout Buddhist eunuchs in the court such as Wang Jin 王縉 (700–782), and Yuan Zai 元載 (d.777) (close associate of eunuch Li Fuguo) and Yu Chao'en.[45] In 1987 an archaeological expedition uncovered an entire subterranean prayer chapel in Xi'an, structured like an Esoteric Buddhist mandala.[46] Tang sources record non-Han Esoteric masters becoming the lovers of women close to and part of the royal household, and at the risk of great danger because of the likelihood of state secrets being compromised; for as Jinhua Chen notes, the rise warlords following the An Lushan rebellion made the need for strengthening court legitimacy greater, thus in turn making Esoteric Buddhism part of what bound court and society together.[47] This occurred as Esoteric Buddhist masters' ties with courts within the states surrounding the Tang also grew stronger, as witnessed by the large numbers of Buddhist seekers coming to China from Japan (and Korea) to study, thus raising their political status in the courts of their home countries, as occurred with Japanese Esoteric Buddhist Pilgrims to the Tang, Ennin and Kukai.[48]

Much of this evidence, circumstantial though it is, indicates that the convergence which took place, the "perfect storm," as it were, rested upon eunuch influence in the court and military following three decades of rebellion and social chaos being linked to desire of the Tang empire's foreign settlers to find ways to become more integrated into the Tang empire through the Tang military. This set of circumstances led to a space of shared agency leading towards the

43 DALBY 1979, 578; NAKATA 2007, 298; TSUKAMOTO 1975, 256.
44 REISCHAUER 1955.
45 DALBY, *Op.Cit.* 579
46 CHEN 2011, 293.
47 Ibid.
48 REISCHAUER 1955.

decision for Adam and Prajna to work together. Though the project may initially have come from the court's eunuchs, it was likely viewed favorably by the imperial household, the esoteric clerical establishment, and the Church of the East at once. The Tang court's advisors were also part of this confluence of forces as well however. In 787, the same year as the translation incident, and as recorded in the occurred, as recorded in *Zizhi Tongjian* 資治通鑑 penned by respected Tang court historian Si Maguang 司馬光 (1019-1086), four thousand non-Han "foreign guests"(胡客 hu ke) were given an ultimatum—either joining the Tang army or leaving the empire altogether.[49] This proposal came not from a eunuch but from Chancellor Li Mi 李密 (722-789) who argued that the money being spent by the government to support these individuals and families invited to the Tang to help quell the An Lushan rebellion and who'd stayed on and whose children were now part of a second generation and enculturated, could be much better spent by incorporating them into the empire and making them a permanent part of the *Shencejun*. When this is looked at in relation to the other developments within the late Tang religious and social history covered above, the question then becomes not how was it that the eunuchs approached the Church of the East with a scheme to work together with an Esoteric Buddhist master with known connections to the same groups of foreign fighters to which the Church of the East belonged, and in order to present a translation of an Esoteric Buddhist text containing prayers enabling the emperor to protect his kingdom through the invocation of Tantric deities, but rather, how it could not have taken place.

In order to gain access to how Adam and the Church of the East may have felt about the project—a political venture with such a strong Buddhist flavor and whether or not this would have conflicted with their Christianity, it is expedient to turn to the portion of the Xi'an stele just before the paean to Adam's father, military leader and priest Yazdbozid, which attempts to relate the Church of the East to the Tang army and remind readers of the service of the church to the empire during the rebellions. For here the Tang Empire is seen to be embodied, quite literally, in the emperor's person, whose very body is linked to the elements of the cosmos. The Church of the East's leaders are shown having helped to preserve and sustain the empire and having been co-creators of the emperor's charisma since the first establishment of the church with Aluoben's visit to the court in 638. This can be thought of in terms of the rituals for rain for the empire's crops performed by Esoteric Buddhist masters in the late Tang period. This made use of already existing elements within Chinese imperial ideology in which religious institutions and institutions of statecraft had long been fused:

> 玄宗至道皇帝. 令寧國等五王親臨福宇建立壇場. 法棟暫橈而更崇. 道石時傾而復正. 天寶初. 令大將軍高力士送五聖寫真寺內安置. 賜

[49] *Zizhi Tongjian* 資治通鑑 232; NAKATA 2001, 171.

絹百匹. 奉慶睿圖. 龍髯雖遠. 弓劍可攀. 日角舒光. 天顏咫尺. 三載大秦國有僧佶和. 瞻星向化. 望日朝尊. 詔僧羅含僧普論等一七人. 與大德佶和。於興慶宮修功德。於是天題寺牓。額戴龍書。寶裝璀翠。灼爍丹霞。睿扎宏空。騰淩激日。寵賚比南山峻極。沛澤與東海齊深。道無不可。所可可名。聖無不作。所作可述。
肅宗文明皇帝。於靈武等五郡。重立景寺。元善資而福祚開。大慶臨而皇業建。
代宗文武皇帝. 恢張聖運. 從事無為. 每於降誕之辰. 錫天香以告成功. 頒御饌以光景眾. 且乾以美利故能廣生. 聖以體元故能亭毒. 我建中聖神文武皇帝. 披八政以黜陟幽明. 闡九疇以惟新景命. 化通玄理. 祝無愧心. 至於方大而虛. 專靜而恕。廣慈救眾苦。善貸被群生者。我修行之大猷。汲引之階漸也。若使風雨時. 天下靜. 人能理. 物能清. 存能昌. 歿能樂. 念生響應. 情發目誠者. 我景力能事之功用也

The accomplished and enlightened Emperor Su Zong rebuilt the Illustrious churches in Lingwu and four other places; great benefits were conferred, and felicity began to increase; great munificence was displayed, and the imperial State became established.
The accomplished and military Emperor Dai Zong magnified the sacred succession, and honoured the latent principle of nature; always, on the incarnation-day, he bestowed celestial incense, and ordered the performance of a service of merit; he distributed of the imperial viands, in order to shed a glory on the Illustrious Congregation. Heaven is munificent in the dissemination of blessings, whereby the benefits of life are extended; the holy man embodies the original principle of virtue, whence he is able to counteract noxious influences.
Our sacred and sage-like, accomplished and military Emperor Xuan Zong, appointed the eight branches of government, according to which he advanced or degraded the intelligent and dull; he opened up the nine categories, by means of which he renovated the Illustrious decrees; his transforming influence pervaded the most abstruse principles, while openness of heart distinguished his devotions. Thus, by correct and enlarged purity of principle, and undeviating consistency in sympathy with others; by extended commiseration rescuing multitudes from misery, while disseminating blessings on all around, the cultivation of our doctrine gained a grand basis, and by gradual advances its influence was diffused. If the winds and rains are seasonable, the world will be at rest; men will be guided by principle, inferior objects will be pure; the living will be at ease, and the dead will rejoice; the thoughts will produce their appropriate response, the affections will be free, and the eyes will be sincere; such is the laudable condition which we of the Illustrious Religion are labouring to attain.[50]

[50] HORNE 1917, 389.

Concluding Remarks and Suggestions for Further Research

One way of understanding and analyzing the Church of the East's complex identity among non-Christian cultures is to regard it as a social body formed in relation to imperial courts starting in its Persian setting, before the fall of the Sasanian Empire (225-651), and as having transferred its courtly and imperial nature into the Tang imperial setting (607-917) and to the early Abbasid Empire (750 onwards) in parallel ways. Courtly eunuch generals acted in the late Tang setting as intermediaries between the imperial house and the military, providing social cohesion between factions of the Tang government and its multiethnic military stationed in its frontier regions. Esoteric Buddhism, as an ideological system, a set of texts and practices, could serve similar cohesion creating mechanisms within the late Tang setting as well as aid and abet the imperial designs of the Tang Empire's leaders. It is hardly surprising therefore that the Church of the East faction stemming from Bactria, an area the inhabitants of which had long been accustomed to the connections between statecraft and Buddhism seen in Esoteric Buddhism, would be approached to translate an Esoteric text. The church's formation in China, linked so heavily to its service at the Tang court since the early seventh century, and coming after centuries of service to the Sasanian Persian court, would have found involvement in putting down the An Lushan rebellion only heightening the church's readiness to participate in Tang state building initiatives. Further research into the question of why the translation incident of 787 occurred and what it says about the courtly and imperial nature of the Church of the East may wish to concentrate on three areas: 1) further investigation of the eunuchs' links to the imperial translation bureau, of which the Tang annals make mention; 2) Emperor De Zong's own thoughts about the use and effectiveness of Esoteric Buddhist rituals and clerics to protect and bring stability to the empire, starting with the preface, penned by his own hand, accompanying the official retranslation of the *Sutra of the Six Mahayana Paramitas*, and in which thought that the emperor's personal charisma is seen fused with that of the Esoteric Buddhist deity Manjuśri;[51] and 3) the extent to which the Church of the East leaders were mirroring activities already underway within the Mesopotamian branch of the church under the Abbasids, or conversely, were feeling pinned in, and forced into such activity within the Tang ideological sphere because of rising Islamic influence in Central Asia, as has been suggested by Nakata.[52]

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[51] See note 10.

[52] NAKATA 2011, 176.

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WHY DID CHINESE NESTORIANS NAME THEIR RELIGION *JINGJIAO*?

ZHANG Xiaogui
Jinan University, China

The Chinese historian Chen Yuan (陈垣，1880-1971) divided the history of Christianity in China into four periods: (1) "Jingjiao" (景教，"Nestorianism") of the Tang Dynasty; (2) "Yelikewen jiao" (也里可温教) of the Yuan Dynasty; (3) Catholicism of the Ming Dynasty; and (4) Protestantism during the Qing Dynasty.[1] The earliest time when Christianity, as a religious system, was recognized by the Chinese government and publicly engaged in missionary activity, should be in the period of the Tang Dynasty. At the beginning of Nestorian Christianity in China, it was called "Bosi Jing jiao" (波斯经教)[2] in the official Chinese documents. In the fourth year of the period of Tianbao (745), the royal court changed its name to "Da Qin" (大秦). The name "Jingjiao" was rarely used in official documents or other secular records. Until the period of Tianqi (天启) during the Ming Dynasty (1621-1627), the religion was finally popular to everyone, since the "Nestorian stele of Xi'an" was unearthed. Moreover, Dunhuang Nestorian documents written in Chinese also prove that this name was only used by Nestorians themselves to designate their religion at that time. In order to reflect on the propagation characteristics of "Jingjiao" during the Tang Dynasty, this paper will outline why and how the name of this religion was changed on the basis of previous research, especially on the questions why they called their religion "Jingjiao", and why this name was limitedly used among them,

1. The Meaning of "Jing" in "Jingjiao"

The name "Jingjiao" first appeared in the "Nestorian stele of Xi'an" originally erected in 781, the second year of the period Jianzhong. The explanation can be found in line 8 in the inscription: 真常之道，妙而難名，功用昭彰，強稱景教. "This true and unchanging system of doctrine is mysterious and difficult to name. To display its manifest operation, we make an effort and call it the Illus-

[1] CHEN, Yuan 陈垣 1980,93.
[2] [That is: The Persian Religion or the Religion from Persia.]

trious Religion [i.e. Jingjiao].'[3]

There are various interpretations and arguments among scholars regarding this name. Li Zhizao, a famous scholar and Christian of the late Ming Dynasty, deciphered "Jing 景" as "huge, shining and luminous.[4] This idea was also supported by Emmanuel [Diaz], a Portuguese Jesuit of the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties. He once said, "Jing Jing is going to describe the holy religion, it is firstly ordered to name it 'Sheng jiao', the same meaning as 'Jingjiao'. The word 'Jing' can be understood as marvel and bright in holy religion. 'Jing' means 'great and luminosity'"[5] Qian Nianqu 钱念劬, the man who visited Europe several times, also concentrated on the meaning of "Jingjiao". He explained that Jing jiao is Nestorianism, an old religious sect of Christianity. According to the stele, this religion should have come to China in the early 7th century because it reached Chang'an in the 9th year of the period Zhenguan (A.D. 635) of the Tang Dynasty and the temple was founded in the 12th year. Since then, it was quite important to give it a Chinese name for the reason that it was hard for people to speak its original name, so it was named 'Jing', the same meaning as 'illumination' in the New Testament. What's more, 'Jing' also meant 'great', similar to 'catholic'. Above all, this Chinese name was well suited.[6] This explanation also emphasized Jing's meaning of being "great" and "illustrious", as what Chen Yuan pointed out. However, he thought the name of "Jing jiao" may have probably been a transliteration.[7]

In addition, some scholars especially emphasize "Jingjiao" as being "illustrious". Yang Senfu thought "Jing" to be "bright and obvious", therefore, it could be explained as the "bright and glorious religion".[8] Luo Xianglin also sticked to this idea by saying that Christianity always advocates 'the light of life' to give people inspiration and revelation.[9] Gong Fangzhen connected the Nestorian stele with the pictures on Nestorian tombs' rock in Qi River of Central Asia, pointing out that there is a cross above the words in the Nestorian stele, and cloud, lotus beneath it, with small halo on the left and right side, a symbol of

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3 LEGGE 1888, 8-9.

4 LI, Zhizao 李之藻 1878, 14. "景者大也，炤也，光明也·" [Unless otherwise stated, the English translation of all the Chinese texts in this article was given by the present author himself].

5 YANG, Manuo 陽瑪諾 1878, 1. "景淨士將述聖教，首立可名曰聖教，景教也·識景之義，聖教之妙明矣·景者，光明廣大之義·"

6 QIAN, Nianqu 钱念劬 1981，173. "景教者，基督舊教之聶斯托爾派也·據碑，貞觀九祀，至於長安，十二年爲建寺，則教入華境，必在七世紀之初·入中國後，不能不定一名稱，而西文原音弗諧於口，乃取《新約》光照之義，命名曰景·景又訓大，與喀朵利克（Catholique）原義亦合，可謂善於定名·"

7 CHEN, Yuan 陈垣 1980, 94-95.

8 YANG, Senfu 杨森富 1977, 41. "明明景教"（Ming Ming Jing jiao）

9 LUO, Xianglin 罗香林 1966, 12.

shining brightly cross. It shows us this religion holding "luminosity".[10]

However, Fang Hao did not agree with this point. He said that it is only a guess because eight hundred and forty-four years had passed between the time when the Nestorian stele of Xi'an was erected and Li Zhizao wrote the book in the 5th year of the period Tianqi of the Ming Dynasty(1625). The word 'Jing' can be a common word seen in the inscription, for not only the writer's name is 'Jing Jing' but also some priests' name themselves as 'Jing Fu' and 'Jing Tong'. There are other words like 'Jing Men', 'Jing Fa', 'Jing Si', 'Jing Zhong', 'Jing Li', 'Jing Zun'. So, 'Jing' should be explained as 'holy' instead of 'illustrious'."[11]

Saeki Yoshiro 佐伯好郎, a Japanese specialist on Nestorianism, also thought the original idea of "Jing" should be explained as "great" rather than "illustrious". Moreover, he listed four points to clarify why Nestorianism regarded itself as "Jing Jiao": first of all, Christians proclaim Jesus as the light of the world, while the first meaning of "Jing" should be "illustrious". Secondly, "景" (Jing) is combined by two Chinese words, "日" (Ri) and "京"(Jing), because "京" in Chinese implicates "great", "Jing" means "great illustriousness". What's more, it could fawn upon the Buddhist policy at that time. "Dari jiao" 大日教 which is similar to Esoteric Buddhism is popularly believed in Chang'an so that Nestorianism tried to use it in order to raise its influence for the reason that this name "Dari jiao" or "Rida jiao" could be easily accepted by common people. The last but not the least, it can fawn upon Taoism as well. There is a piece of Taoist scripture named "Emperor's Neiwai Jing Sūtra", from which maybe the Nestorians borrowed for their own name.[12] This explanation was agreed by Zhu Qianzhi.[13] Though Saeki's ideas which emphasized "great" and "illustrious" in "Jing" was accepted by other scholars, but the other two reasons seem to be a farfetched interpretation. For example, "Jing", the word in Nestorian stele is a combination of "口"(Kou) and "京"(Jing) instead of a traditional way, "日" (Ri) and "京" (Jing). It is commonly written in all kinds of confirmed Dunhuang Nestorian Chinese documents.[14] In the Luoyang Inscription erected in the 12th month of the 9th year of the period Yuanhe (A. D. 814), which is thirty years later than the time of erecting of the Xi'an Nestorian stele, "Jing" is also written with a combination of "口"(Kou) and "京"(Jing). Both two steles reach a common view on the writing way of "Jing", though their locations and times are different from each other. Therefore, it is difficult to clarify the explanation of "Jing" through the word "日" (Ri).

10 GONG, Fangzhen 龚方震 1992, 30.
11 FANG, Hao 方豪 1969，2433.
12 SAEKI 佐伯好郎 1916, 127-130. SAEKI, P. Y. 佐伯好郎 1935, 26-30.
13 ZHU, Qianzhi 朱谦之 1998, 131.
14 LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 2003, plates.

"Jing" is spoken as "King" in ancient time, "K" serves as the initial consonant, it means "bright" and "great" by the study of Bernhard Karlgren, a Sweden Sinologist.[15] As Lin Wushu pointed out that it is named "Jing jiao" because of its meritorious operations, which is manifestly displayed on the basis of context in the Nestorian stele of Xi'an, that is, "Jing" is the same as "Zhaozhang 昭彰" in Chinese. "Zhao" is "illustrious", and "Zhang" means "manifest illustriousness". Lin thinks that two messages hiden in this word "Zhaozhang". One is that the purpose of "Jing jiao" is to guide people to illustriousness, the other indicates its remarkable function. If so, the word "Zhaozhang" not only covers "bright" and "great" which were mentioned by Bernhard Karlgren, but also contains "Saint" in Chinese. Since the initial consonant of Jing's ancient pronunciation is equal to the one of "Christ" and "Catholic" in English, the transliteration by Nestorian priests in the Tang Dynasty is quite a masterpiece for using it to represent Christianity.[16]

Zhao Bichu also considers that the pronunciation of "Jing" comes from "Christos" in Greek so that "Jing" is similar to "Ji" in "Jidu" which we translate "Christ" in Chinese. Both of "Jing" and "Ji" are born out of the sound of "ch", and its literal meaning may come from "I am the light of world" in Jesus declaration. "Jing" is "light" and "illustriousness". "It is a excellent piece of writing that the pronunciation of them is well matched (instead of their shape)." "That Nestorians choose 'Jing' to be the name of their religion in China is a stroke of genius and a real kind of Chinese style."[17] So far, two views above by Lin and Zhao are the most comprehensive and reasonable on the explanation of "Jing".

No doubt "Jingjiao" is interpreted as "great" and "illustrious" in academic circles, but there is no deeper discussion on why Nestorianism calls itself "Jingjiao". One may look for the true essence of the word "Jing" in the Chinese Nestorian documents themselves.

2. "Jingjiao" is a local Chinese name

On the basis of the phrase "真常之道，妙而難名，功用昭彰，強稱景教" (This true and unchanging system of doctrine is mysterious and difficult to name. To display its manifest operation, we make an effort and call it the Illustrious Religion) at line 8 of the stele of Xi'an, it shows us that "Jingjiao" is obviously named by themselves. Prof. Lin Wushu comes up with the following

15 KARLGREN, B. 1957, 200.

16 LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 2003, 54 note 1. "假如根據景教碑上下文意思，其之所以"強稱景教"，乃因其"功用昭彰"也，也即是說，"景"者，昭彰也。而據辭書，"昭"者，光明也；"彰"者，顯明也。竊以爲，此處"昭彰"，蓋意含雙層，一謂該教有導向光明之功用，二謂這一功用非常顯著。若然，則昭彰一詞，既涵蓋高本漢所言的 bright，great，亦涵蓋漢語"聖"之意思。既然"景"字古音的聲母與西文 Christ 和 Catholic 相同，故以此字來作基督教的漢名，不失爲唐代來華聶斯脫利教士音譯孕義之傑作。"

17 ZHAO 趙璧礎 2006, 69-70.

view:

> 唐代基督教之採用景教之名，可能會早於立碑的時間；因爲如果當時其在華之教徒，還未流行這一名稱的話，碑文便不可突以景教自命。但景教之名的流行，看來多局限於教徒本身，並不爲社會民眾所廣爲接受；至少在天寶之前，一般民眾並不稱其爲景教，否則，朝廷也就無必把其改爲大秦教了。即使要改，也必順乎時尚，改稱景教。[The time when Christianity in the Tang Dynasty used the name 'Jingjiao' may be earlier than the time when the stele of Xi'an was erected. It would have not appeared on the stele if this Chinese name had not been popularly employed among Chinese Nestorians at that time. It seems that the use of 'Jingjiao' may be only limited among believers, still not accepted by other people. Before the period Tianbao, people did not call it 'Jingjiao'. Otherwise, the royal court would not have taken it seriouslz to change its name to 'Daqin jiao'. Even if so, it should be changed to 'Jingjiao' so as to adapt to the fashion at that time.][18]

It is certain that the populace rarely mentioned it as "Jingjiao" even if its name was really changed after the period of Tianbao according to documentary records. It seems likely that "Jingjiao" was not merely named but also used by Nestorians themselves. To make it convenience to study, all phrases with "Jing" in Chinese Nestorian documents are listed now below:

Abbreviation:
A = The Xi'an Stele Inscription 景教流行中國碑頌並序[19]
B1= Luoyang Inscription: Xuanyuan zhi ben jing 經幢本《宣元至本經》[20]
B2 =Luoyang Inscription: Xuanyuan zhi ben jing 經幢本《宣元至本經》幢记[21]
C = Dunhuang MS: Zhi xuan anle jing《志玄安樂經》[22]
D1 = Dunhaung MS: Gloria in Excelsis Deo. P.3847《景教三威蒙度贊》[23]
D2 = Dunhuang MS: Zunjing. P.3847《尊經》[24]
D3 = Dunhuang MS: Colol phon. P.3847 "按語"[25]
E = Dunhuang MS: Xuan yuan ben jing 敦煌本《宣元本經》[26]

	A	B1	B2	C	D1	D2	D3	E
景教 Jing Jiao	3	1	1	5	2			1
景淨 Jing Jing	1						1	

[18] LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 2003, 54-55.
[19] ZHU, Qianzhi 朱谦之 1998, 223-230.
[20] LIN-YIN. 2008, 329-331.
[21] Ibid.
[22] HANEDA, Tōru 羽田亨 19291; see pictures of these documents in Kyō-U Shooku 杏雨書屋 2009, 128—133.
[23] LIN, Wushu 2003, 124-126.
[24] Ibid., 126-127.
[25] Ibid., 127.
[26] Ibid., 176-177.

景尊 Jing Zun	1							
景宿 Jing Su	1							
景日 Jing Ri	1		1					
景風 Jing Feng	1							
景門 Jing Men	2							
景 Jing	1							
景寺 Jing Si	2							
景福 Jing Fu	1		1					
景 衆 Jing Zhong	2							
景命 Jing Ming	1							
景力 Jing Li	1							
景士 Jing Shi	1							
景通 Jing Tong	1							
景福 Jing Fu	1							
景性 Jing Xing			1					
景僧 Jing Seng			1					
景通法王 Jing Tong Fawang		3				1		2

The name of "Jing Jing" who is the writer (translator) of the stele inscription and other scriptures can be found in Syriac: "Ad^{h}àm qaššîšâ w^{e}k^{h}ôr'appèsqôpâ w^{e}p^{h}apšê d^{he}Ṣinèstân".[27] Pelliot and Moule translated: "Adam, priest, country-bishop and Chinese master".[28] And one of two other monks with "Jing" in their names, "Jing Tong" locates at the second of the right line 1, his Syriac name is Srgys (Sergiys). His duties can be matched in Syriac, "qaššîšâ w^{e}-k^{h}ôr'appèsqôpâ šîangtswâ".[29] Pelliot translated it as "prêtre et chorévêque, supérieur de monastère".[30] We can understand it as "priest, country-bishop and abbot". Moule translated it as "priest and Country -bishop shiangtsua".[31]. Duan Qing considered "w^{e}k^{h}ôr'appèsqôpâ" should be translated to "quasi-bishop".[32] "Jing Tong" is also listed as a "Chogyal" in "Honored Persons and Sacred Books (Zun Jing)" attaching to Dunhuang Manuscript P.3847. It is explained as "Jesus

27 PELLIOT. 1984, 55.

28 PELLIOT's translation is：Adam [moine King-tsing] chorévêque et “maître de Loi” de la Chine. See PELLIOT 1984, 56. MOULE's translation is: Priest and country-bishop and fapshi of Zinistan. See MOULE 1930/1972, 35. For more detailed information on this topic, see LIN-YIN 2009, 192-193.

29 PELLIOT 1911, 664-670.

30 PELLIOT 1984, 60.

31 MOULE 1930/1972, 51.

32 DUAN 段晴 2003, 465.

Christ" by Wu Qiyu.[33] Another one, "Jing Fu" locates at the third of the right line 2, his Syriac name is "Isodad", meaning "it is given by Jesus", namely "Jingzun Zhi Fu" which accords with "Jing Fu" in Chinese.[34] The research mentioned above reveals that three names listed with "Jing" are not transliteration, but local Chinese names. It illustrates that most of the Nestorian clergy used to give themselves a local Chinese name during the period of "Jing Jing".[35]

All technical terms with "Jing" listed above derive from "Jingjiao", including "Jing Zun", "Jing Su", "Jing Ri", "Jing Feng", "Jing Men", "Jing Si", "Jing Fu", "Jing Zhong", "Jing Ming", "Jing Li" and "Jing Shi". Apparently, both "Jing Shi" and "Jing Zhong" refer to Nestorian believers. "Jing Shi" which is found at the line 24 is an admiration to those ecclesiastics and Yisi was called "Jing Shi in white". "Jing Zhong" shows up twice in the text. One is at the line 18: The Emperor Daizong [763-779], the Accomplished and Martial, grandly signalized his succession to the throne, and conducted his affairs without (apparent) effort. Always when the day of his birth recurred, he contributed celestial incense wherewith to announce the meritorious deeds accomplished by him, and sent provisions from his own table to brighten our Jingzhong (Illustrious assembly).[36] Another is in the inscriber's words: The present Chief of our Law being the priest Ningshu, charged with the care of the Jingzhong (Illustrious Communities) of the East.[37] It can be seen in the context that both of "Jing Zhong" refer to all Nestorian believers no matter whether they were priests or religious, including all baptized followers.[38]

Some scholars have already noticed that "Jing Su" and "Jing Feng" written in the Xi'an Nestorian inscription are commonly used in ancient Chinese. Yang Senfu has ever pointed out that both two phrases grow out of Chinese literary quotation of auspicious sign, making a strained interpretation to the giant star which turns up on the birth date of Jesus so as to illustrate to people that the coming of Nestorianism will bring luck to China. There is a sentence in the inscription: "景宿告祥，波斯睹耀以來貢" (Jing Su is shinning as a symbol of luck, Persians find it illustrious and come to pay tribute). It stated that these eastern scholars recognized the birth of the Saviour when discovering the appearance of a giant star and then they went to Bethlehem to pay respect to Jesus. Another sentence in the stele inscription, "巨唐道光，景風東扇" (Jing Feng is coming to the east and the Sacred will rise again in the great Tang Dynasty), implies the coming of Nestorianism to China is an auspicious sign, too. "Jing

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33 WU, Qiyu吴其昱 2000, 20-21.
34 PELLIOT 1984, 57-61.
35 LIN, Wushu 2009, 149-193.
36 Xi'an Inscription: line 20-21. "代宗文武皇帝，恢張聖運，從事無爲，每於降誕之辰，錫天香以告成功，頒御饌以光景眾"
37 Ibid., 31. "時法主僧寧恕知東方之景眾也"
38 LIN-YIN 2009, 202.

Xing" is a lucky star in Chinese ancient legends, according to which a brilliant emperor will be born when it can be seen in the sky. For example, *Tianguan Shu of Shi Ji* (《史记·天官书》, *Historical Records*) records that Jing Xing can be seen in clear and clean sky, it is a star of morality and has unpredictable shape, generally arising at a prosperous country)[39]. *Shi Ji Zhengyi* 史记正义 explains that the shape of 'Jing Xing' looks like a half moon; it is born on every last day of the month and every first day of the next month of a lunar calendar and only the man with moral integrity and the brilliant emperor can see it.[40] *Song Shu Furui Zhi* 宋书·符瑞志 says that Jing Xing emerged during the period of 70 years when Emperor Yao was on the throne.[41] In addition, "Jing Feng" is also one of the auspicious signs in ancient China. A sentence is written in *Liezi Tangwen Pian* 列子·汤问篇: When the music comes to an end, order to play Gong music to cover other four kinds of sounds. Then 'Jing Feng' is blowing; colorful cloud is flowing in the sky; sweet dew is falling to the earth and lovely spring water is rushing out of the well.[42] Another sentence written in *Luzhi Zhuan of Houhan Shu* 后汉书·卢植传 records that everyone focuses on this matter, it is said that 'Jing Feng' will bring fortune to us because what had happened in Huai.[43] Above all, Yang considers "Jing jiao" as quite an elegant name suitable to Nestorianism which is as beautiful as Taoism and Confucianism.[44] Zhao Bichu also shares the same view on this textual research.[45]

It is said that "Jing" is the light of (sun) in *Shuowen Jiezi* 说文解字 [*Analytical Dictionary of characters*]. According to Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815):

> 日字各本无．依文选张孟阳七哀诗注订．火部曰：光者，明也．左传曰：光者远而自他有耀者也．日月皆外光．而光所在处皆有阴．光如镜，故谓之景．车韦笺云：景，明也．后人名阳曰光，名光中之阴曰影．别制一字，异义异音．斯为过矣．尔雅毛诗皆曰：景，大也，其引申之义也．
> There is no word 日(Ri) in the original text, it is noted later by Zhang Mengyang 张孟阳 in his poem *Qi Ai* 七哀. The Fire (part) said, 'the light is the same as bright'. It is said in *Zuo Zhuan* 左传 that the light is far away and it gets its own dazzle. Shadow is hiding behind the light and the light of both the sun and the moon is external. It is called 'Jing'. "Light is just like a mirror" as Che Wei (车韦) explained it, and 'Jing' is luminosity. Later generations give the name '光' (guang) to light, and '阴' (yin) to shadow. It is quite a mistake to make another

39 "天精而见景星·景星者，德星也·其状无常，常出于有道之国"
40 *ShiJi*史记, 1336. "景星狀如半月，生於晦朔，助月爲明·見則人君有德，明聖之慶也".
41 Song Shu 宋书, 761. "(堯)在帝位七十年，景星出翼"
42 YANG, Bojun 杨伯峻 1979, 177. "将终，命宫而总四弦，则景风翔，庆云浮，甘露降，澧泉涌"
43 *Hou Han Shu*, 2114. "天下聚目而视，攒耳而听，谓准之前事，将有景风之祚"
44 YANG, Senfu 杨森富 1970, 28-32; YANG, Senfu 杨森富 1977, 41-42.
45 ZHAO, Bichu 趙璧礎 2006, 69.

> word which has a different pronunciation and meaning. *Er Ya* 尔雅 and *The Book of Songs* edited by Mao (毛诗) both said, 'great' was an extended meaning of 'Jing'. [46]

There is a sentence written in *Jinyu Er of Guoyu* 国语·晋语二, "景霍以为城，而汾、河、涑、浍以为渠，戎、狄之民实环之" (Jing Huo is regarded as the wall of the castle, Fen, He, Su and Hui rivers are used as city moats, people of Rong and Di are living around them). Wei Zhao (韋昭 204 - 273) annotated, "景，大也" (The meaning of Jing is great).[47] Bangu's (班固 32 - ca. 92) *Song of the eastern capital* 东都赋 said, "铺鸿藻，信景铄。扬世庙，正雅乐" (Profound and powerful writing is composed, great reputation is believable. The music of celebration is played to advocate the royal family's ancestor temple). Li Xian's 李贤 explaination quoted by Gaobu Ying 高步瀛 (1873 - ca. 1940) is, "景，大也" (Jing is the meaning of great).[48] Above all, all scholars share the same points that the meaning of "Jing" in "Jing Jiao" is "great" and "illustriousness", which obviously come from the usage of "Jing" in ancient Chinese.

Both Yang and Zhao's researches prove that "Jing" is commonly used in ancient Chinese and Chinese Nestorians employed it to name their own religion. "Jing Feng" 景风, the wind of kindness and peace, received several explanations in Chinese paleography. Volume 4 of *Fayuan Zhulin* 法苑珠林 records that the smooth and peace wind in four seasons is 'Jing Feng' written in *Er Ya*. Li Xun said 'Jing Feng is the wind of peace'.[49] It compared "Jing Feng" to "the wind of kindness and peace", which accorded with Nestorian moral function and was easily accepted by Chinese emperor, too. In addition, "Jing Su" is also another ancient auspicious sign, though it has been not emphasized in Yang and Zhao's researches. Besides, *Baihu Tong* 白虎通 records that 'Jing Xing' is a great star, it often appears in the sky even if the moon does not show her face, it is a useful sign for people that they can do farming in the evening.[50] It illustrates that "Jing" in "Jing Xing" also implicates "great".

In addition, "Jing Fu" in Nestorian stele is another phrase commonly used in ancient Chinese, though it is easily ignored by scholars. It usually means "good fortune" or "happy lot". *Chuci of the Book of Songs* 诗·楚茨篇 says that drinks and food are prepared well for sacrifice and dinner, it is [thanks to] 'Jing fu' that

46 *Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字, (edition 1988), 304.
47 XU, Yuangao徐元诰 (edition 2002), 288.
48 XIAO, Tong 萧统 (edition1986), 32.
49 SHI, Daoshi 释道世 (edition 2003), 128. 《尔雅》曰：四时和为通正谓之景风。李巡曰：'景风，太平之风也。'
50 CHEN, Li 陈立 (edition 1994), 287. "景星者，大星也。月或不见，景星常见，可以夜作，有益于人民也"

the life is comfortable and we can enjoy the food).[51] Zhengxuan (郑玄 120 - 200) annotated that the meaning of 'Jing' is great.[52] Cao Zhi (曹植 192 - 232) in his *Jingwei Pian* 精微篇 said that the sacred emperor lives a long life owning to 'Jing Fu'".[53] It seems that among all phrases with "Jing" used by Nestorians, except for "Jing Zun", "Jing Men", "Jing Si", "Jing Zhong" and "Jing Shi" pointing to those priests, believers or churches, all emphasize the meaning "great" in "Jing".

It is sure that some more descriptions about "illustriousness" can be found in the Bible. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."[54] "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."[55] Jesus is regarded as the "bright son" (明子) who can save the world from the darkness, as it can be seen in Chinese Nestorian ducument *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* 景教三威蒙度讚:

> 蒙圣慈光救离魔。难寻无及正真 (line 5)
> 常，慈父明子净风王 (line 6)
> His holy light be received, and devils destroyed. His infinite truth eternal, where can be sought?
> Merciful Father, bright Son and king of wind pure.[56]

While the meaning of "Jing" is "illustriousness" in ancient China. It seems that many proper nouns with "Jing" like "Jing Su", "Jing Feng" and "Jing Fu" were borrowed from ancient Chinese so that its auspicious meaning can be easily accepted by Chinese people. Moreover, "Jing" can represent "great" and "illustriousness" in Nestorianism as well, which is beneficial to Nestorians just like killing two birds with one stone. Nestorian *Book on Mysterious Peace and Joy* (志玄安樂經) writes down the conversation between "Mishihe" 彌施訶 and "Monk Cenwen" 岑穩僧伽 to teach believers how to find peace and happiness, and "Jing jiao" emerges five times in it: [57]

- 一切眾真景教，皆自無始暨因緣，初累積無邊囉稜浼福，其福重極萬億。

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51 "以为酒食，以享以祀，以妥以侑，以介景福"
52 WANG, Xianqian 王先谦 (edition 1987), 750. "景，大也".
53 CAO, Zhi 曹植 (edition 1984), 332. "圣皇长寿考，景福常来仪"
54 John 8:12.
55 Matthew 5:14-16.
56 TANG 2002, 181-182.
57 HANEDA 1929; Kyō-U Shooku 杏雨書屋 2009 ; TANG 2002, 187-198.

(Line 37-38). All believers of the real Jing Religion (Nestorianism), from no beginning to the first cause, have collected endless blessings which are immersed in Luo Ji. These blessings are as much as millions (line 37-38).

- 人亦如是，持勝上法，行景教因。(Line 129). The same is true with a person. He should hold on to the law of success and therefore, follow the teaching of the Religion of Jing(Nestorianism), plus helping to save all creatures.(line 129).
- 惟此景教勝上法文，能爲含生，禦煩惱賊，如彼甲仗，防護身形。(Line 137-138). Only this Religion of Jing (Nestorianism) is the supreme law of success. It can protect all creatures from the thief of worriers and troubles, like the armor and weaponry which protects the soldier's body. (line 137-138).
- 惟此景教勝上法文，能與含生，渡生死海，至彼道岸，安樂寶香。(Line 140-142). Only this Religion of Jing (Nestorianism) is the supreme law of success. It can help all living beings to sail across the sea of life and death and to reach the other side of the sea where there are peace, joy, treasures, and scents.(line 140-142).
- 惟此景教勝上法文，能令含生，反（返）真智命，凡有罪苦，咸皆滅除。(Line 144-145). Only this Religion of Jing (Nestorianism) is the supreme law of success. It can command all the living beings to return to the life of truth and wisdom. All the sins and sufferings will be eliminated. (line 144-145).

The Nestorians took this ancient Chinese word, "Jing" skillfully to be the name for their religion so as to advocate their creed about saving the people. It shows that their preaching way is quite better qualified.

3. From "Jing Jiao" to "Daqin jiao"

At the early period of its coming into China, Nestorian Chinese name was "*Bosi jiao*" 波斯教 or "*Bosi Jingjiao*"波斯經教, until the royal court gave an imperial edict to correct its name at the 4th year of the period Tianbao (745):

> 波斯經教，出自大秦，傳習而來，久行中國。爰初建寺，因以爲名。將欲示人，必修其本。其兩京波斯寺，宜改爲大秦寺。天下諸府郡置者，亦準此。
>
> The Persian scriptural religion proceeded from Ta-ch'in (Syria). By preaching and practice it came, and has long ago spread to China. From the first it established monasteries. Concerning the name which is used, it is for the future wished that men should be instructed that it is necessary to restore the original. Its 'Persian Monasteries' in the two capitals shall therefore be changed to 'Ta-ch'in (Syrian) Monasteries'. Throughout the Empire all which are set up in the districts and departments also shall observe this."[58]

On the reason why the royal court corrected Nestorian Chinese name, Forte pointed out that because the Sassanid Persian Empire had already declined, the

[58] *Tanghuiyao* 唐會要 864. FORTE 1996, 353-354.

official support to this religion came to the end.[59] Samuel Lieu also held similar views and he thought the royal court changed the name of Nestorianism in order to cut off its relationship with defeated Persia.[60] Lin Wushu considers that the imperial edict issued by the royal court clearly suggests that the chaos on the name of Nestorianism brought a lot of inconvenience to the government's management work, it is really necessary for the royal court to correct it. Meanwhile, it also shows that the understanding of three foreign religions coming from the west has been far more deepening. ‘Daqin Temple’, the name for popular Christian temples at that time indicates that the royal court was aware that although Nestorianism was the same as Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism, all of which came from Persia, the origin of Nestoriannism is in Daqin, its distance is farther than Persian which is so called 'fifteen thousand miles away from Chinese capital').[61] Klimkeit also pointed out the purpose of correcting Nestorian Chinese name is to distinguish the relationship with other two foreign religions, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism.[62] Lin Wushu has recently written an article pointing out that Nestorians at that time did not satisfy the current situation and raised a request to the royal court from their own initiative.[63] Tim Barrett started from the disadvantageous background caused by conflict between Buddhism and Taoism, deeming that "Daqin" was an ideal place in Chinese records and classics, especially in Taoist scriptures. While considering the position of Byzantine Empire in the international relationship, it was a measure looking for protection by requesting a rename to "Daqin" after Nestorians clearly recognized their circumstance.[64] All the theories above, talking about the background of Nestorian rename discussed by subjective and objective aspects, undoubtedly having different evidences, are not comprehensive and complete.

In Eichhorn's opinion, the introduction of Christianity, as same as Buddhism, was beneficial for people to regain peaceful mind from daily trouble or chaos. Besides, the protection of this religion helped attract more and more foreign Nestorian businessmen coming into China. Eichhorn also pointed out that, in 745, being given the name by the Emperor to Nestorian temples proved that all these temples were finally admitted by the government at that time.[65] However, according to the inscription on the Nestorian stele> in the 9th year of the period Zhenguan (A.D. 635), he [Olopun] arrived at Chang'an. The emperor sent his

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59 FORTE 1996, 364.
60 LIEU 2000, 54.
61 LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 2003, 49. "這一詔文的頒發，顯然暗示了我們：當時對基督教稱謂之模糊不清，已給政府的管理工作造成了某些不便，朝廷才不得不加以正名。同時亦表明了唐人對傳自西域的三個夷教的認識，已有所深化。把當時流行的基督教的寺院稱爲大秦寺，表明朝廷已意識到該教雖然與摩尼教、火祆教同樣傳自波斯，但真正的源頭是在大秦，其要比‘距京師萬五千里而贏’的波斯遙遠得多”
62 GILLMAN-KLIMKEIT 1999, 270.
63 LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 2008, 151.
64 BARRETT 2002, 555-560.
65 EICHHORN 1973, 256.

minister, duke Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, bearing the staff of office, to the western suburb, there to receive the visitor, and conduct him to the palace. The Scriptures were translated in the Library. [His Majesty] questioned him about his system in his own forbidden apartments, became deeply convinced of its correctness and truth, and gave special orders for its propagation.(line 8-9)"[66] Nestorianism had already received official admission when Olopun reached China for preaching and translating with nestorian scriptures in the 9th year of the period Zhenguan. According to the newly unearthed Luoyang Stone Pillar with an inscription of the *Sutra on the Origin of Origins of the Daqin Luminous Religion* 宣元至本經幢記, we know the names of "the Abbot of the Daqin Monastery Fahe Xuanying with his lay name Mi, Disciplinarian Great Virtue Xuanqing with his lay name Mi, the Lector (the 9th rank) Great Virtue Zhitong with his lay name Kang."[67] This means there was a Daqin Temple in Luoyang established during the period of Taizong.[68] These instances illustrate that the royal court of Taizong had already allowed Nestorian missionary activities and temple building at that time, earlier than the time when the temple was renamed as Da Qin Temple in 745.

According to the religious policy during the period of Xuanzong, the rename for Nestorianism in the period Tianbao is not an isolated political event, but an intention to strengthen the management of all religions. Since the 17th year of the period Kaiyuan (A.D. 729), the royal court strengthened the control on monks and nuns through accounting management: the order of all monks and nuns should be accounted into record in every three years.[69] After the system of monks and priests accounting management had been put into practice at that time, its basic policy was followed by other dynasties in China. Religious name, original name, native place, registered permanent residence, job and the number of monks should all be covered in the accounting record.[70] It is said that in the section of *Baiguan Zhi of Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書·百官志, (New Book of Tang), all Buddhist monks, nuns, male and female Taoists should be accounted in records of country and prefecture respectively every 3 years; The record of Buddhist monks and nuns is handed to the 'Shrines', male and female Taoists to 'Zongzheng' and 'Sifeng'.[71] The system of accounting management moved forward in the 8th year of the period Tianbao (A.D. 749) that the doctor of 'Sifeng' mastered the appointment on nobility, royal family, titled madams, and male and

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66 "（阿羅本）貞觀九祀（635），至於長安．帝使宰臣房公玄齡，惣仗西郊，賓迎入內．翻經書殿，問道禁闈．深知正真，特令傳授" Translation in LEGGE 1888, 10-11.

67 See Line 20 of the inscription. "大秦寺寺主法和玄應俗姓米威儀大德玄慶俗姓米九階大德志通俗姓康". Translation of the inscription by Li Tang in TANG 2009, 124.

68 YIN-LIN 2008.

69 SHI, Zhipan 釋志盤 1675. "敕天下僧尼三歲一造籍"

70 *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, 10032.

71 *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書, 1252. "每三歲州、縣爲籍，一以留縣，一以留州；僧、尼，一以上祠部，道士、女官，一以上宗正，一以上司封"

female Taoists, etc. In 11th month of the 8th year of the period Tianbao, male and female Taoists were ordered to be accounted into record in every ten years, which would be carried out as an eternal law. In 11th month of the second year of the period Zhide (A.D. 757), it was ordered that the accounting management for male and female Taoists should follow previous system and be controlled by 'Sifeng Department'.[72]

During the period of Kaiyuan, Xuanzong not only strengthened the management of religion, but also intended to control them through people's thought. For example, in the 10th year of Kaiyuan(A.D. 722), Xuanzong issued *The exegesis of Xiaojing* 孝經註 for enforcement: Strictness can bring respect, and benignity is able to teach the meaning of love), through which the emperor intended to rebuild the system of religion and recovered social morality as well.[73] Between the 20th and 21st year of Kaiyuan (A.D.732-733), Xuanzong completed *The royal exegesis of Daode Jing* 道德經御註.[74] Moreover, the royal court issued *The royal exegesis of Vajracchedika-sutra* 御註《金剛經》 and placed it equally to *Daode Jing* and *Xiao Jing*.[75] These three scriptures were known as the law which will not spoil and the reality of humanism and are both hidden in these classics.[76] Ge Zhaoguang commented on this incident that an emperor standing for legitimate thought and system chooses these three scriptures representing Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism respectively, which not only are the simplest version among all kinds of scriptures in ancient China, but also the one exploring the root of universe and the depth of one's heart. They are annotated by the government and requested to be read by nobilities or common people, which probably indicates that the atmosphere about knowledge and thought is turning to the fusion, conciseness and exploration on the depth of human soul.[77] Another important point is that this change is a result of political purpose to maintain their rule. After all, the consideration on policy is far more important than the one on belief when the royal court formulates religious policy.

While the royal court strengthened the management on monks, priests and nuns in both Kaiyuan and Tianbao periods, control on other foreign religions was not

72 *Tong Dian* 通典, 634. (司封郎中）掌封爵、皇之枝族及諸親、內外命婦告身及道士、女冠等・天寶八載十一月，敕道士、女冠籍每十載一造，永爲常式・至德二年十一月，敕道士、女冠等宜依前，屬司封曹.

73 Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗, 2540. "因嚴以教敬，因親以教愛".

74 LIU 柳存仁 1991, 475.

75 *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, 173.

76 Ibid. "不壞之法，真常之性，實在此經"

77 GE 葛兆光 2003, 26. "一個象徵著正統的思想與秩序的皇帝，選擇這三部分別屬於釋、道、儒家的經典，而這三部經典又是各種思想經典中最簡約的文本，這三個文本又恰恰是探究宇宙本原與人心深處的經典，它們以官方的名義加以註釋，並且要求士庶普遍閱讀，這本身是否已經暗示了知識與思想的風氣，在八世紀以後即將嚮融合、簡約和內心深處的方面轉移".

ignored. In the 19th year of the period Kaiyuan (A.D.731), Xuanzong ordered a debate on Manichaeism, then a Manichean monk handed the religious creed, discipline, classic and organization on the basis of *Moni Guangfo Jiaofa Yilue* 摩尼光佛教法儀略 to the royal court.[78] However, the Chinese emperor did not agree on his saying and ordered to forbid it in the following year. An edict issued in the 7th month of the 20th year of the Kaiyuan period (732) is recorded in *Tong Dian* (juan 40):

> 末摩尼法，本是邪見，妄稱佛教，誑惑黎元，宜嚴加禁斷。以其西胡等 既是鄉法，當身自行，不須科罪者。
> Manichaeism is a heresy that falsely claims to be Buddhism and dupes and entices the common people, for which reasons it should be banned. If westerners (Xi Hu 西胡) who obey local laws proclaim themselves to be Manichaeans, they must not be punished.[79]

It was also written in *Huichang yipinji* 會昌一品集 (juan5):

> 摩尼教天寶以前，中國禁斷。自累朝緣回鶻敬信，始許興行。江淮數鎮，皆令闡教。
> Prior to the Tianbao reign, Manichaeism was banned in China. Several reigns later, since the Uighurs strictly adhered to the religion, it began to be allowed to spread. In various towns of the Jiang-Huai region, the government ordered that centers for the dissemination of the religion be established.[80]

Some scholars hold that the prohibition on Manichaeism is a result of instigation by Buddhism or wrong understanding on heresy of Manichaeism.[81] In fact, it was quite difficult for Chinese emperors to pay attention to or interest in foreign religions. Whether it was the instigation by some main religions or inaccurate comprehension, stronger management would apply to them for the purpose of power safeguarding. The policy conceming Zoroastrianism was mentioned in *Jiu tangshu* 舊唐書 (Juan 42):

> 開元初，一切罷之。今唯有薩寶、祆正二官而已。……開元初唯留薩寶、祆祝及府史，餘亦罷之。
> They were all abolished in the early period of Kaiyuan, only "Sabao" and "Xianzheng" still remained. ……in the early period of Kaiyuan, they were all abolished too, only "Sabao", "Xianzhu" and "Fushi" still existed.[82]

"Sabao Fu" is generally regarded as an institution for foreign residents and it served as a Zoroastrian official function. "Xianzheng" 祆正 and "Xianzhu" 祆

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78 LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 1983.
79 *Tong Dian* 通典, 1103.
80 LI, Deyu 李德裕 1985 (edition).
81 LIU, Yi 劉屹 2006, 85-109.
82 Jiu Tang Shu 旧唐书, 1803.

祝 of "Sabao Fu" administered Zoroastrian affairs. It means that Zoroastrian priests who were responsible for temple running had been brought into the official system under Chinese central royal court.[83] Why did "Saobao", as the only foreign official position in the Tang dynasty, receive such a courteous reception? Chen Yuan gave his conclusion:

> "Sabao", "Xianzheng", "Xianzhu", "Shuaifu"(a mistake to "Fushuai) and "Fushi" are specially set for Zoroastrian temple by the Tang Dynasty. Although they had low position in court, they still existed instead of being abolished like other official positions at the early Kaiyuan reign. It can be said that it must be some special reasons affecting the emperor. At that time, Tang dynasty was going to spread its influence on the western district, the emperor wanted to win popular support through this policy.[84]

Though regarded as a special treatment of Zoroastrianism that the royal court brought "Sabao fu" into the official system, it was also a policy for controlling the religion by the royal court. Zoroastrians in the two capitals and "Qixi" district were allowed to do sacrificial practices twice one year, but the common people were forbidden.[85] Another event which might happen during the Kaiyuan reign shows that Nestorian priests were insulted by Buddhist monks after Wu Zetian became the emperor. According to the Xi'an stele, "in the period Shengli (699), the Buddhists, taking advantage of their strength, made their voices heard (against the Religion) in the eastern capital of Chou, and in the end of the year Xian-tian (712), some inferior officers greatly derided it; slandering and speaking against it in the Western Hao. But there were the chief priest "Luo Han", the greatly virtuous "Ji Lie" and others, noble men from the golden regions, all eminent priests, keeping themselves aloof from worldly influences, who joined together in restoring the mysterious net, and in rebinding its meshes which had been broken." (line 14).[86] It was said that the Nestorian Church sent the priests "Luo Han" and "Ji Lie" to China to change this situation. Similar event was written in *Cefu Yuangui* 冊府元龜 (juan 546):

> 柳澤，開元二年（714），爲殿中侍御史、嶺南監選使。會市舶使右衛威中郎將周慶立，波斯僧及烈等，廣造奇器異巧以進。澤上書諫曰："臣聞不見可欲使心不亂，是知見欲而心亂必矣。竊見慶立等雕鎸詭物，制造奇器，用浮巧爲珍玩，以譎怪爲異寶，乃理國之所巨蠹，聖王之所嚴罰，紊亂聖謀，汨斁彝典。
>
> Liuze held the post "Dianzhong Shiyu shi" and "Linnan Jianxuan shi" in the sec-

[83] LIN, Wushu 林悟殊 2005, 238-239.

[84] CHEN, Yuan 陈垣 1980 a , 319. 薩寶，及薩寶府祆正、薩寶府祆祝、薩寶率府（當爲府率之誤）、薩寶府史，皆唐朝特爲祆祠所設之官。官秩雖微，然視流內外九品之官，開元初一切罷之，其存而不廢者，唯此數職；其有特別關係，可斷言也。時方有事西域，欲以此懷柔一部分之人心，亦政治作用所應爾也。

[85] *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書(juan 46), 1195. "兩京及磧西諸州火祆，歲再祀，而禁民祈祭"。

[86] English Translationin LEGGE 1888, 14-17.

> ond year of Kaiyuan (741). At that time, "Shibo shi Youwei Wei zhonglang jiang" Zhou Qingli and Persian monk Ji Lie and others produced strange implements for tribute. Then Liuze submitted a written statement to the emperor, "I have ever heard a saying that it will not confuse one's mind if he only wants it but not sees it, it will certainly mess up one's thought if he both knows and wants it. I have found that Qingli carved strange statues and produced peculiar implements, regarded ingeniousness as rare curios and monstrousness as special treasure, it was a big problem for state management and the emperor should give them a punishment, for it would mess up emperor's strategy and national law.[87]

Saeki Yoshiro believed that "Ji Lie" here was the same as "Gabriel" mentioned in the Nestorian stele.[88] But due to the accusation by Liu Ze who was sent to the southern China by the Tang Dynasty, Gabriel, as a Nestorian priest, could receive punishment. In addition, another Gabriel's achievement was recorded in *Cefu Yuangui* (juan 975) that the king of Persia sent the chief Pan-na-mi and the bishop Jilie to the Chinese court in the 8th month of the twentieth year of Kaiyuan reign. Chinese emperor gave the chief an official position 'Guo Yi', the priest a purple cassock and fifty pieces of silk and sent them back to Persia.[89] Feng Chengjun believed that "Gabriel" is a short translation for "Korappiqopa", a name for country-bishop in Syriac.[90] Therefore, the "Gabriel" here may be different from the one mentioned in the Nestorian stele, for the latter one had already been an important figure in Chinese Nestorian church in the early Kaiyuan period, it was impossible for him to go back to Persia to join the tribute work.[91] However, this achievement, Gabriel being sent back to Persia, illustrates that Nestorian priests never gave up their duties on preaching work though their actions did not go so smoothly and successfully that they had to reach Chang'an, the capital of China at that time, by pretending to be Persian diplomatic envoy. On the other hand, it reflects their endeavor for preaching, which could not be matched by other foreign religious priests. In the end, Nestorian Christianity received enough attention and courteous reception from the Chinese royal court. For example, in the beginning of the period Tianbao (742-755), "Xuanzong (713-755), the emperor of the Perfect Way, orders were given to the great general Gao Lishi, to send faithful likeness of the five sacred (emperors), and have them placed securely in the (original) monastery, with a gift of a hundred pieces of silk. The elegant pictures were presented with (the proper) congratulations. Although the dragon (i.e. imperial) beard in them was too far off, the bow and sword could be touched with the hand; when the sun's horns (=rays) shed on them their light, the celestial countenances seemed to be within about a cubit

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87 *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, 6547-6548.
88 SAEKI 1937, 93-94.
89 *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, 11454. "開元二十年（732）八月庚戌，波斯王遣首領潘那蜜與大德僧及烈來朝，授首領爲果毅，賜僧紫袈裟一幅及帛五十定，放還"
90 FENG 馮承鈞 1931, 62.
91 LIN 林悟殊 2009, 163-164.

(from the spectator). (line 15-16)[92] Nestorians were even allowed to enter Xuanzong's palace for religious services (line 17-18). They also received an inscription from Xuanzong, which appeared on the walls of the monastery, and its lofty front bore the dragon-writing. The precious lines were like the shining feathers of the king-fisher, and splendid as the ruby hues of the clouds about the sun. The tablets of wisdom filled each empty space, and their radiance rose up as if to provoke the sun. The gifts of favour were immense as the vast height of the southern hill; and the flood of rich benevolence like the depth of the eastern sea. (Line 17)[93]

Although the rename for Nestorianism by the royal court in the fourth year of Tianbao reign is a result of Nestorian priests' endeavor, it was not an honorable thing as they propagandized, for the Tang court took this policy only for strengthening management on religions according to the analysis above. Meanwhile, Nestorians tried hard and were eager to do missionary work in China. The rename by the royal court did not satisfy the need of Nestorian priests, they finally gave their religion a Chinese name by themselves.

4. The Motivation for Self-Titled "Jing Jiao"

The change of name from "Bosi jing jiao" to "Daqin jiao" by the royal court in the fourth year of the period Tianbao indeed makes clear that the origin of Nestorianism should never again be mixed up with other Persian religions. Nestorian believers also changed "Persian priest Olopun" to "most-virtuous Olopun", a modification to imperial edict in the twelfth year of the period Zhenguan in the Nestorian stele of Xi'an,[94] proving that Chinese Nestorians intended to weaken the Persian color but underlined their connection to Daqin. Moreover, Nestorians agreed to the rename by the royal court for catering to the ruler's taste. However, "Daqin" which is only a geographic concept covers a too wide a range to be a name for Nestorianism, and it sounded so foreign that even Buddhists discriminated against it, calling it a heterodox doctrine, which could be harmful to Nestorian missions. Changing their religion's name to a local Chinese one may be a good tactic.

It is recorded in the Xi'an inscription (line 20-23) that Nestorian priests received enough concentration from the royal court for their contribution on suppressing insurrection after "Anshi Turmoil":

> A great benefactor to us is the priest "Yi Si", a great officer of the Banqueting Court, wearing the robe of purple wrought with gold, bearing also the seal of Associated Commissioner for the Northern Regions, and, as overseer of the Examination Hall, gifted with the Purple Cassock; - a man of courtesy and most kindly

92 English translation in LEGGE 1888, 16-17. See also PELLIOT 1996, 259.

93 English translation of the inscription in LEGGE 1888, 16-19. Cf. DUAN 2003, 442-444.

94 FORTE 1996, 349-367.

> nature, who zealously carries into practice the (right) way when he hears it. From afar, from the city of Rajagriha, he came to Zhongxia (China). His science surpassed that of the three dynasties, and his arts were extensive and in all respects complete. Performing at first certain duties in the palace, his name came to be entered in the pavilion of the kings. When the duke Guo Ziyi, a secretary of state, and king of the division of Fenyang, was first appointed to the charge of the military operations in the northern regions, (the emperor) Suzong gave him this (Isi) to accompany him to his command. Though he enjoyed (the duke's) favour in his sleeping-tent, he made offerings (to the Illustrious Communities) of the glittering ornaments which he received as gifts; he spread out (in their halls) the carpets interwoven with gold as resting-places for the speakers; in some he repaired the old monasteries as they had been before; in others, he enlarged the preaching-halls, elevating and ornamenting their corridors and walls, till they appeared like pheasants on the wing. Carrying out further the rules of the Illustrious Religion, he expended his acquisition in deeds of benevolence. Every year he assembles the priests of all the monasteries, who engage in their reverent services and pure offerings for all the space of fifty days.[95]

After Guo Ziyi succeeded in suppressing insurrections with the help of Nestorian Christians, Emperor Suzong (763-779), the Accomplished and Intelligent, rebuilt the monasteries of the Illustrious (religion) in Ling-wu and four other places.[96] However, Buddhists' influence on people was far deeper than that of the Nestorians. Buddhists held Nestorian teaching as heresy. There is a description about Ji Bin 罽賓, a nation west of China in *Lidai Fabao ji* , written by a Zen monk from "Jiannan Jingzhong Baotang pai" between the ninth year (774) and the fourteenth year of the Dali reign. It describes the king [in that country] did not believe in Buddhism, ruined temples and killed Buddhists, but he made the heretic 'Mo Manni' and 'Mishihe' the state religions.[97] "Mishihe" here was obviously related to Nestorian Christians. The idea that Mishihe was regarded as heresy might come from Buddhists within the Shuo Fang legion, who joined in putting down the Anshi-Rebellion.[98] After the rebellion subsided, the influence of Monk Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (670-762) of the Southern Zen Buddhism grew much stronger than before, as he provided with much help when Emperor Dai Zong and Guo Ziyi tried to take back the two capitals from the rebels. After that, Emperor Su Zong made offerings to Monk Heze in the royal palace and ordered artisans to build a temple called Heze Temple.[99] Buddhist power was getting stronger and stronger in the Tang Dynasty that Nestorianism was only a foreign religion in Buddhists' eyes. Nestorian priests had ever offered their help to Buddhist translation to cater for the governor's taste, but un-

95 This English translation is in LEGGE 1888.20-25.

96 Inscription line 17-18. See translation in LEGGE 1888.18-19.

97 "其王不言佛法，毀塔壞寺，殺害衆生，奉事外道末曼尼及彌師訶等". See Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 180. RONG 榮新江 1999, 130-150; RONG 2007, 427-445.

98 Ibid.

99 Zan Ning 贊寧 180. "代宗、郭子儀收復兩京，會之濟用頗有力焉・肅宗皇帝詔入內供養，敕將作大匠並功齊力，爲造禪宇於荷澤寺中也"

fortunately, it failed to reach the goal. This event was recorded in *The newly edited catalogue of Buddhism in the Zhenyuan period* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (juan 10):

> 時爲般若，不嫻胡語，復未解唐言；景淨不識梵文，復未明釋教。雖稱傳譯，未獲半珠；徒竊虛名，匪爲福利。緣表聞奏，意望流行。聖上睿哲文明，允恭釋典，察其所釋，理昧詞疏。且夫釋氏伽藍、大秦寺，居止既別，行法全乖。景淨應傳彌師訶教；沙門釋子，弘闡佛經。欲使教法區分，人無濫涉；正邪異類，涇渭殊流。
>
> Since at that time Prajna was unfamiliar with the Hu language and did not yet understand the speech of T'ang, and Ching-ching did not know Sanskrit nor understand Buddhist doctrine, though they professed to have made a translation they had not caught half the gems.They were seeking for vain glory with no thought of doing good. They composed and presented a memorial with the intention and hope that [their work] would be published. His Majesty, endued with learning and intelligence and reverencing the law of Buddha, examined their translation. The doctrine was obscure, the style indifferent. Since a Buddhist convent (Qielan) and a monastery of Daqin monks differ in customs and are wholly opposed to one another in their religious practices, Jingjing must preach the teaching of Messiah (Mi-shi-he) and the Buddhist monk (Sha-men) make known the sutra of Buddha. We wish to have religious teaching well defined that men may have no uncertainty. Truth and error are not the same; the Jing and the Wei are not alike.[100]

Jing Jing joined in translation work in the Zhenyuan period (785-804), later than the second year of Jianzhong reign (781) when the Nestorian stele was erected in China. The name Jingjiao used for Nestorianism was given at that time. Jing Jing who was a Christian assisted Buddhist monks in translating their sutra on purpose in order to satisfy the emperor, but he failed for the reason that "Prajna was unfamiliar with the Hu language and did not yet understand the speech of T'ang, and Ching-ching did not know Sanskrit nor understand Buddhist doctrine", leading to "the doctrine was obscure, the style indifferent",[101] he then received criticism from the emperor. Another much more important reason is that the characteristic of Jing Jiao as a foreign religion was quite difficult to change, because "[they] wish to have religious teaching well defined that men may have no uncertainty. Truth and error are not the same; the Jing and the Wei are not alike". Nestorianism is only a hererical religion different from Buddhism which is the "right" religion in Chinese emperor's eyes.[102]

It took a long time for the royal court to change the name for Nestorian Christianity even if Nestorian Christians had changed their name to Jing Jiao by them-

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[100] Translation taken from TAKAKUSU 高楠順次郎 1896, 589-591.
[101] See Translation in the above-quoted text. Cf. footnote 100.
[102] Cf. footnote 100.

selves. It was recorded in Shu Yuanyu's 舒元輿 *Stele Inscription for Chongyuan-si [temple] in Yongxing county, Ezhou* 《鄂州永興縣重巖寺碑銘》 in the Changqing period of the Tang Dynasty (821-824):

> 故十族之鄉，百家之閭，必有浮圖爲其粉黛。國朝沿近古而有加焉，亦容雜夷而來者，有摩尼焉，大秦焉，祆神焉，合天下三夷寺，不足當吾釋寺一小邑之數也。
>
> A Buddhist temple serves as a necessary adornment for a town in which ten clans or a district in which a hundred families dwell. This dynasty has witnessed the addition of new and ancient faiths and has tolerated the influx of various foreigners, and yet the number of temples of the three incoming foreign faiths- Moni, Daqin and Xianshen- throughout the empire cannot rival the number of our Buddhist temples to be found in one small town.[103]

It is no doubt that "Daqin" here refers to Nestorianism, indicating that it was really difficult for Nestorians to wipe off its external color for it was still only one of those three foreign religions in the eyes of the royal court, though Nestorians had made great efforts to change their image by renaming their religion as "Jing jiao", which shows a determination to sinicize Nestorianism by approaching close to Chinese local religion. However, whether the endeavor would lead to success was not on account of their will.

In addition, percentages of Nestorians came from Persia at that time, and most of Nestorians in Chang'an were western people according to the Syriac names of priests listed in the stele of Xi'an.[104] Well, it easily leads to a problem if the motivation of their self-titled name was to differ from other Christian churches in Daqin. Although it has been confirmed that "Jing jiao" refers to Nestorian Christianity in the academic field, other scholars point out that among Christians in Tang-China, there were also Jacobits[105] and Melkites[106] apart for Nestorians. It was certainly possible for the priests of other Christian churches to come to China on the basis of Sino-Western relationship. Actually, according to available documents and records, they had no influence in China because few priests from other Christian churches reached China for religious purposes. Byzantine Empire sent envoy seven times to Chang'an from the seventeenth years of the Zhenguan period (643) to the 5th month of the fourth year of the Tianbao era (742). Qi Sihe and Barrett both held these envoys had no direct link to Nestorian priests. The royal court changed the name of Nestorianism to "Daqin" owing to the intention that they wanted to emphasize Byzantine Empire

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103 *Tang Wen Cui* 唐文粹 (edition) 1986.

104 PELLIOT 1984.

105 LATOURETTE 1934, 209, 231; ATIYA1980, 221.

106 ALBIRUNI, 282-283. SIMS-WILLIAMS 1981, 441-446; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1992, 43-61; CHEN 陳懷宇 1999, 190; LIN, Y. 林英 2006, 37-56.

as the origin of their religion.[107] However, this theory is hard to be established.

Obviously, Daqin Jiao clearly manifested its nature that it was only a foreign religion. The way a religion was regarded as foreign by the Tang royal court was distinct. Both Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism that were limited among western people were regarded as "country-religions". Nestorians might have clear understanding of this situation, but for the sake of increasing the number of their believers in China and preaching much more smoothly than before, they had to reduce its color of foreignness so as to be treated more equally as Chinese local religions. Therefore, giving their religion a Chinese name would be an ideal way.

5. Epilogue

Compared to other two foreign religions which came to China in the same period, Nestorian Christians took great pains in choosing a local name for their religion. Manicheans used their founder's name "Mani" to name their religion.[108] Later, it was called "Moni jiao" in Chinese official documents, and the royal court had accepted it and never changed its name. "摩尼" (Mani) was also written as "末尼" (moni) or "麻尼" (mani) in other documents in China only for the reason that they were homophones and the strokes were much more simple.[109] As we can see, Manicheans did not find many difficulties regarding their Chinese name, the same with Zoroastrianism, another religion that came from Persia. Its name was given by the founder's title "Zoroaster". Zoroaster was supposed to be written as "Zarathustra", but due to an erroneous pronunciation from ancient Greek. Although ancient Chinese knew this name "Zarathustra" and transliterated it as "Su Luzhi" 蘇魯支, Zoroastrianism was called "Xian jiao" 祆教 instead of "Su Luzhi".[110] According to the statement made by Chen Yuan, Zoroastrian believers worship both illustriousness and sun, moon, stars, and Chinese thought they worshipped God and gave a name 'Huo Xian' 火祆 to their religion. 'Xian' 祆 is short for 'Tian shen' 天神 in Chinese, to call it Xian instead of Tian Shen 天神 is a distinction that Xian 祆 is a foreign God."[111] However, Zoroastrians did not show any objections to this name due to the lack of a complete religion system in China. It seems that both Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism carried an obvious foreign color in their names in Chinese, but Nestorians took much more initiative to change the Chinese name of their religion since they were not satisfied with the name given by the royal court. They

[107] QI 齊思和 1956, 35-36; BARRETT 2002, 555-560.

[108] An explanation paper dealing with the name was delivered to the royal court by a Manichean priest. See LIN 林悟殊 1997, 283-286. Mani might be a partial tone from Buddhist terms (mani means pearl in *Pali*).

[109] LIN 林悟殊 2007, 190-243.

[110] ZHANG 张小贵 2010, 1-26.

[111] CHEN 陈垣 1980 b, 304.

renamed their religion "Jing jiao" on purpose in order to convert the Chinese. "Jing jiao" is a local Chinese name that reflects the depth of Sinicization of this foreign religion.

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THE INSTITUTION OF *CHONGFU SI* OF THE YUAN DYNASTY[1]

YIN Xiaoping
South China Agricultural University, China

The Chinese historian Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠 noted in his *Zhonghua Erqiannian Shi* 中華二千年史 (*History of China during Two Thousands Years*) that religious officers [of the Yuan Dynasty] are considered more significantly valuable than those of previous dynasties.[2] It has been proved exactly correct that the religious institutions established in the Yuan Dynasty were more in number and greater in power. Generally speaking, *Xuanzheng yuan* 宣政院 (Supreme Control Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs) was in charge of Buddhism and Lamaism; *Jixian Yuan* 集賢院 (Academy of Scholarly Worthies) administrated Taoism; and *Chongfu Si* 崇福司, was responsible for all Christian affairs throughout the country. Of these three religious institutions, the *Xuanzheng Yuan* was in the highest rank, had the greatest power and was listed the first grade of court rank; *Jixian Yuan* and *Chongfu Si* were both had the second court rank. However, neither *Xuanzheng Yuan* nor *Jixian Yuan* was confined to those religious affairs. Actually, the former managed all Tibetan affairs at the same time[3] and the latter administered mainly schools in the empire, *yin* and *yang matters*, etc.[4] *Chongfu Si* was the only organization completely dealing with the religious affairs.

In terms of the originality of these religious institutions, only *Chongfu Si* was invented by the Yuan Dynasty, while the authorities of Buddhism and Taoism had been developed for a long period since the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420 AD).[5] When the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty was founded, which was well known for its tolerant religious policy, the Buddhist or Taoist officials increased their authorities and political status. While Christianity, known as the religion of *Yelikewen* in the Yuan Dynasty, was just a newly introduced foreign religion. Why

1 [A similar version of this article was first published in a Festschrift for Lin Wushu, edited by ZHANG Xiaogui 张小贵(编) 三夷教研究-林悟殊先生古稀纪念论文集, 2014. The present version has been revised and edited by the editor of this volume].

2 DENG 1983, 371. "宗教官較前朝為重"

3 *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 87), 2193.

4 Ibid, (vol. 87), 2192.

5 XIE & BAI 1990, 10-13. ZHANG & ZHAO 2005, 54-64.

the government set up a highly central institution for Christians, and how this newly-created religious institution operated, is worth exploring.

1. The Basic Recordation of *Chongfu Si*

Chongfu Si was set up as an office of a lower grade of second court rank under Kublai Khan's reign (1260-1294 AD). The basic information about this bureau is recorded in the official document *Yuan Shi* 元史 [*History of the Yuan Dynasty*].

> 崇福司，秩〔從〕二品。掌領馬兒哈昔列班也里可溫十字寺祭享等事。司使四員，從二品。同知二員，從三品。副使二員，從四品。司丞二員，從五品。經歷一員，從六品。都事一員，從七品。照磨一員，正八品。令史二人，譯史、通事、知印各一人，宣使二人。至元二十六年置。延祐二年，改為院，置領院事一員，省並天下也里可溫掌教司七十二所，悉以其事歸之。七年，復為司，後定置已上官員。[6]
>
> *Chongfu Si,* shall take the fixed salary of the lower second court grade. The Bureau has the jurisdiction over Ma'erhaxi 馬兒哈昔 (*mar*, the honorable title given to a Nestorian Bishop)[7], *Lieban* 列班 (*rabban*[8] lit., the great religious teacher), *Yelikewen* 也里可溫 (ärgägün, mainly refers to the Eastern Syriac Christians)[9], and duties engaging in the sacrifice and other similar ceremonies in *Shizi Si* 十字寺 (the Cross Monastery). [The Bureau consists of] four directors ranking of the lower second court grade; two associate directors ranking of the lower third court grade; two subordinate directors ranking of the lower fourth court grade; two deputies ranking of the lower fifth court grade, one chief secretary ranking of the lower sixth court grade, one assistant secretary ranking of the lower seventh court grade; one commissary of records ranking of the upper eighth court grade; besides two annalists, one translator, one interpreter, one seal-keeper and two couriers. The Bureau was founded in the 26th year in the *Zhiyuan* 至元 period (1289 AD), and in the 2nd year in the *Yanyou* 延祐 period (1315 AD). It was promoted and expanded to *Chongfu Yuan* 崇福院 (the Department for Christian Affairs[10]) with one President over it to direct the whole affairs. To this

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6 *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 89), 2273.

7 LIEU 1980, 73, 84. PELLIOT 1914, 637.

8 According to Paul Pelliot, Lieban is the phonetic transcription of Rabban. See PELLIOT 1914, 637

9 As to the Chinese word "*Yelikewen*" 也里可溫, it originally referred to the Christians under the Mongol Empire and appeared frequently in the official documents at that time. Chen Yuan 陳垣 considered that it referred to all Christians of different schools, including Catholicism and Eastern Syrian Christianity, but in the present author's opinion, *Yelikewen* mostly referred to those Nestorians. Cf. YIN 2006, 299-300.

10 Cf. Hucker's translation of the term Chongfu Si. See HUCKER 1985, 196.

> Department all affairs of *Yelikewen* were transferred after seventy-two offices of *Zhangjiao Si* 掌教司 (Office for Local Christian Affairs) across the Empire were abolished, which took control of the *Yelikewen*'s affairs. Seven years afterwards, however, the Department was made the Bureau again, and the above-mentioned officials were attached to it.[11]

As cited firstly in this recordation, the basic obligation of *Chongfu Si* involved controlling the affairs of *Mar-hasia*, *Rabban*, *Yelikewen* or *Rabban-Ārkāgün*,[12] and supervising the ceremonies of sacrifice and prayers which were held in *Shizi Si* 十字寺 (the Cross Monastery). *Shizi Si* was the common name for the church or the monastery in Yuan China, for the Chinese word "十" (lit., the number ten) looks like a Christian Cross hanging inside the monasteries. However, each monastery in China had its own Chinese name, such as the Monastery of *Daxingguo* 大興國寺, the Monastery of *Yunshan* 雲山寺 and the Monastery of *Jumingshan* 聚明山寺 in Zhenjiang 镇江, and the Monastery of *Xingming* 興明寺 in Quanzhou 泉州. Besides, the Monastery at that time was also called *humra* ("missionary" in Turkic)[13] in some circumstances. In a word, *Chongfu Si,* as the highest authority of the central government, dealt with all affairs about monks, Christians and churches in Yuan China.

As for the history of this institution, *Chongfu Si* was created in the twenty-sixth year under Khubilai's reign (1260-1294 A.D.). It consisted of twenty officers and belonged to the central governmental system, which had an upper grade of the second court rank, and all these positions were finally established in 1320. Below the central authority, there were the local offices of *Zhangjiao Si*, which dealt with the religious matters about the local *Shizi Si* (the Cross Monasteries) and Christians in each circuit. Therefore, it could be argued that a two-level bureaucratic administration had been formed in the earlier Yuan Dynasty.

In 1315, *Chongfu Si* was promoted to a higher ranking Department *Chongfu Yuan*; meanwhile, seventy-two offices of *Zhangjiao Si* around the country were cancelled and abolished. Considering most offices of *Zhangjiao Si* were founded inside the local cross monasteries, it could be speculated that the number of these local monasteries had reached to more than seventy two till 1315. It reveals the fact that the new religion of Christianity had greatly expanded in China during several decades (1289-1311/1315 AD)[14] and was officially equal to

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[11] The translation is given by the present author, and the previous ones were given by Saeki and Moule. See SAEKI 1937, 497-498, MOULE 1930, 225-227.

[12] PELLIOT 1914, 637.

[13] LIU 2001, 15.

[14] Here the article uses the year of 1311. According to an imperial edict in the fourth year of *Zhida* 至大 period, all local religious offices controlled by Buddhists, Taoists and *Yelikewen* were abolished. Cf. *Yuan Dian Zhang* 元典章, (vol. 33), 1128.

the traditional religion of Taoism. There is no doubt that Christianity had advanced rapidly in the earlier period, which I partly attribute to the support and motivation from *Chongfu Si*. On the other hand, the expansion of the local *Zhangjiao Si* was sacrificed by the promotion of *Chongfu Si*, as it was recorded that seventy-two offices in the empire were abolished at the same time. It seems that the promotion of the official status for Christian institution caused an inverse consequence.

2. The Founding of *Chongfu Si*: The Role of Christian official Ai Xue

Being a newly introduced religion, Christianity in the Yuan Dynasty was taken seriously so that it had occupied a highest political status in the central government, which its previous form Tang *Jingjiao* 景教 had not done yet. Some argue that it could firstly ascribe to the tolerant and liberal religious policy of the Yuan government that all religions were respected and utilized by the Mongol rulers. As a result, most leading religious institutions were established, and all religious groups, like Buddhist monks, Taoists, *Danishmand* 答失蠻 (the teachers of Islam) and *Yelikewen* 也里可溫 were authorized to pay no trade tax or to do any forced labor or all requisitioned service that other secular groups must do. *Chongfu Si* was created under such circumstances.

However, if we compare the policy with that of the early and mid Tang Dynasty, the conclusion could not be made so easily. Before the *Huichang* 会昌 period (841-846 AD), the Tang government also adopted the policy of treating foreign religions like *Jingjiao* (Nestorianism) tolerantly. We could find the closest relations between Nestorian monks and the royal court; according to the well-known Xi'an stele, five emperors of the Tang Dynasty treated Nestorians with great respects. Nevertheless, the government never set up an official institution for Christians, both *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism were under the supervision of *Honglu Si* 鴻臚寺 (Court of State Ceremonial), and later under Board of Rites 禮部, the authority dealing with the Buddhist and the Taoist affairs. Among the three foreign religions in the Tang Dynasty, only Xian Jiao 祆教 (Zoroastrianism) had founded its religious office *Xian Zhu* 祆祝 in the office of *Sabao Fu* 薩寶府 (*Sārthavāk*), to manage their religious affairs and obtained a higher political position. The reason why the Tang government set up this institution was as follows: firstly, Zoroastrianism was the dominant faith among those Iranian or Sogodian immigrants and descendants in China; secondly, the office of *Sabao Fu* and *Xian Zhu* had existed in the official system since the Northern Dynasties. The Tang government set up *Xian Zhu* for Zoroastrians in China out of both political and institutional concerns.[15] As for Nestorianism in China, in other words, there was no institutional example for the Yuan government to set up a

[15] LIN 2002, 110.

special office to conduct the Christian affairs; the *Chongfu Si* was totally an original creation by the Mongols.

It sounds logical and rational that the operation of *Chongfu Si,* a newly created religious institution, could imitate that of Buddhism, the leading religion. One of the characteristics of Buddhist institutional tradition, as is well known, was that most posts were occupied by Buddhist monks, and all Buddhist matters were administered by upper Buddhists under the supervision of the Board of Rites.[16] In fact, the Buddhists in Yuan China reached its highest authoritative position in the whole Chinese dynastic history. It not only inherited the monks' ruling tradition in Buddhist institutions, but also created a politico-religious Buddhist leader. In the first year of *Zhongtong* period (1260 AD), Khubilai appointed the Tibetan monk 'Phags-pa lama 八思巴 (1235-1280) *Guoshi* 國師 (state preceptor), and authorized him in charge of all the Buddhists clergy in China Proper and Tibet as well. In the first year of the *Zhiyuan* period (1264 AD), Khubilai founded the Supreme Control Commission for Tibet and the Buddhists[17], and 'Phags-pa lama became the first director of this highest governmental authority which was equal to the Censorate 御史臺, the Grand Council 中書省 and the Palace Secretary of Military Affairs 樞密院.[18] On the whole, all Buddhist officials were selected from the monks from the central authority to the local Buddhist registry in each circuit: select those who are proficient in five major sutra groups and those who are of virtuousness and of accomplishment.[19] An exceptional institution for Buddhist affairs appeared in 1291 when the government needed to control the expansion of Tibetan Buddhism and mediate the conflict among Sino-Tibetan Buddhist groups in regions of the Yangtze River. Branch Bureau of *Xuanzheng* 行宣政院 was created to deal with the Buddhist matters in this year, and unlike the previous Buddhist authorities, it was kept under the control of all secular officials.[20]

The difference between the monkish tradition and the secular administration was clearly defined in the late *Zhiyuan* period. Then I could discuss the running of *Chongfu Si.* In my opinion, *Chongfu Si* was the same as Branch Bureau of *Xuanzheng,* being kept in the control of the secular officials all the time, some of whom were Christians, but none were priests.

The secular nature of this bureau is shown in its daily operation. All posts of *Chongfu Si* were confined to the routine affairs, like other governmental authorities. Four directors, two associate directors, two subordinate directors and

[16] XIE 1990, 11.
[17] [Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs].
[18] CHEN 陳慶英 1990, 112.
[19] *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 6), 106. "通五大部經者為中選，以有德業者為州郡僧錄、判、正副都綱等官"
[20] CHEN 陳高華 2010, 143-160.

two deputies were senior civilian officials; one chief secretary, one assistant secretary and one correspondence secretary were *Shouling Guan* 首領官 (staff supervisors), who dealt with the general and clerical affairs.[21] All these officials were hereditary or selected through imperial examinations,[22] paid by the government and supervised by the Censorate. The lower *Liyuan* 吏員 (the petty officials with no court rank), like the two annalists, one translator, one interpreter, one seal-keeper and two couriers, handled the routine affairs of financial income and expenses, translating and keeping official documents, managing the seals, reporting to the superior institutions, and conveying the imperial edicts, etc. Nothing was related to the unification of faith or modeling the religious rituals. The official ranks of the officials were irrelevant to their hierarchical status in the Church, not to mention that many of them were not Christians at all.

In general, no priests were appointed the posts of *Chongfu Si*, therefore, the founding of the Bureau was not the consequence of any missionary activities of Christian priests and monks (*Mar-Hasia* or *Rabban-Yelikewen)*, as their previous forerunners the Nestorian Monks in the Tang Dynasty always did. If the missionaries in Yuan China intended to increase their religious and political influence among the Mongol rulers, they could take advantage of their close relations with Mongols to make themselves the monk officials,[23] as the Buddhist authorities had done, since many Nestorian missionaries had served the Golden family for a long time, from Genghis Khan to his descendants such as the great khans of Ogadai 窩闊台, Guyug 貴由, Mongke 蒙哥 and Khubilai 忽必烈. However, no priest was appointed the posts of *Chongfu Si*. Why? It seemed that the government avoided doing this on purpose, either probably because the population of Christians was small or because the government could entirely supervise the Christianity and thus reduced the influence from the Eastern Church where the patriarchate was in western Ilkhanate.

Chongfu Si was founded in 1289, just two years later when Ai Xue 愛薛, or interpreter Isa,[24] the first director of *Chongfu Si*, had returned to China from Ilkhanate in 1287 (the twenty-fourth year of *Zhiyuan* period).[25] Ai Xue was entirely trusted by Khubilai after his return from Western Asia, and was given

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21 XU 1987, 41-46.

22 GAO 2011, 32-33.

23 According to the recordation of John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, during the reigns of Khubilai's predecessors like Guyug and Mongke, there were many Nestorian priests in khan's court, (Cf. PELLIOT 1914, 627-629.) e.g., one *Mar-Hasia* once led the followers to pray in the Mongol troop in the 1320s according to the *Zhishun Zhenjiang Zhi* 至順鎮江志 [Gazetteer of Zhenjiang in the Period of Zhishun (1330-1333)] by Yu Xilu 俞希魯. He might be the Nestorian physician *Shabi* 撒必 from Samarqand who cured Tuluy and then got a post as the Court physician and an honorable title of *darqan*. Ma Xuelijisi (or Mar Serghis) who built seven monasteries in South China was one of his grandsons. Cf. YIN 2009a, 305-319.

many most important governmental posts afterwards. Before the year of 1283 (the twentieth year of Zhiyuan period) when he was sent to West Asia, however, Ai Xue had been serving as *kelemechi* 怯里馬赤 (the interpreter, no ranking grade) for a long time, and until 1270 (the seventh year of Zhiyuan period) he was awarded a lower rank of the fifth court grade and appointed the director of *Guanghui Si* 广惠司 (Institute for Moslem Medicine). According to *Yuan Shi* 元史 and "Fulin zhongxianwang shendaobei" 拂菻忠獻王神道碑 [Tombstone of Loyal Prince of *Fulin*] by Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫, *Guanghui Si* was most likely founded by Ai Xue,[26] and his son Luhe 魯合 obtained the post by inheritance.[27]

However, on his return to the capital of Yuan China, Ai Xue was appointed immediately President of *Mishujian* 秘书监 (the Palace Library, the upper third court grade), and two years later Director of *Chongfu Si,* the post of lower second court grade. Ai Xue greatly increased his political influence in court afterwards. Probably, it was Ai Xue who suggested founding *Chongfu Si* firstly, as he did for the Bureau of *Guanghui Si*, and Khubilai accepted it.[28] *Chongfu Si* was established twenty-five years later when the Buddhist authority was founded in 1264, which indicates that Khubilai had no intension to set up an official institution for Christians from the very beginning. The other fact should not be ignored is that the family of Ai Xue had occupied the leading post of *Chongfu Si* for a long time, and it was at least factual in the earlier period of the Yuan Dynasty even if the complete historical documents about *Chongfu Si* were not available.

3. The Directors of *Chongfu Si*

As discussed above, *Chongfu Si* was not the result of Christian missionary work, but the consequence of some Christian officials in court, the most significant one being Ai Xue. Besides Ai Xue, there were other five directors of *Chongfu Si* recorded in Chinese sources; none of them was a priest or a monk, which further proved the secular nature of this bureau.

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24 PELLIOT 1914, 638-640.

25 YIN 2014, 95-103.

26 It was recorded that in the tenth year of Zhiyuan period (1273 AD) the institution of *Jingshi Yiyao Yuan* 京師醫藥院 (the Medical School in the Capital)] which was founded by *huihui* 回回 Ai Xue, was renamed *Guanghui Si* 改回回愛薛所立京師醫藥院名廣惠司. See *Yuan Shi* (vol. 8) 147. Ai Xue was mistaken here for *huihui* (Muslem) because *Guanghui Si* was such an institute for Muslem medicine staffed with Moslem physicians. In Huang Jin's 黃溍 "Fulin Zhongxianwang Shendaobei" 拂林忠獻王神道碑[Tombstone of Loyal Prince of *Fulin*] it was recorded similarly that under the proposal of Ai Xue *Guanghui Si* was founded so as to help the sick, the disable and the poor in the capital. Cf. *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 134), 3248; CHENG Jufu 程鉅夫, "Fulin Zhongxianwang Shendaobei", *Quan Yuan Wen*, (vol. 535), 325.

27 *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 134), 3249.

28 YIN 2014, 95-103.

There were three directors recorded in the official history *Yuan Shi* 元史, Ai Xue (1227-1308) 愛薛, Yeliya 也里牙 (Eliah)[29], and Ma Mouhuozhe 馬某火者. Saeki considered Ma Mouhuozhe was a bishop, therefore he translated his Chinese name as Mar Moses,[30] as we all know, "mar" means bishop in the church and Moses was a common name among Christians. While Moule considered Ma Mouhuozhe to be a Muslim, he pointed out that, "Ma-mou-huo-chê, probably Mahmud Khoja, suggests a Moslem and it is surprising to find him as President of the Christian Ch'ung fu ssŭcho 崇福司, but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the text."[31] In spite of the correctness of these two points of views, whether Ma Mouhuozhe was a priest was still discussable.

Ai Xue was a profound Nestorian from Western land of Fulin 拂林 (or Phrom[32]). Pelliot believed that Ai Xue was an Arabic-speaking Syrian.[33] Ai Xue was recommended by a Nestorian missionary Rabbanata to the court of Guyuk Khan in 1246[34] since then he had been serving in the Mongol court till he passed away in 1308. Before he was sent to Ilkhanate in a diplomatic mission to have an audience with Il-khan Arghun in 1283, Ai Xue had served in the court as an interpreter for his proficiency in western languages for almost forty years, and as the chief of the Offices of Westem Astronomy and of Arabian Medicine for about twenty years. Ai Xue left the court in Ilkhanate in 1285, and reached the capital of China after two-year hard journey.[35] He was immediately given some vital posts on his return, firstly as the President of *Mishujian* 秘書監 (Palace Library), two years later as the Director of *Chongfu Si,* then as *Pingzhang Zhengshi* 平章政事 (Minister of State) and *Qinguogong* 秦國公 (Duke of Qin) in 1298. Neither Chinese nor Persian documents revealed any priest post that Ai Xue might hold. In Rashid al-Din's *Jami'al-Tavārikh,* Ai Xue was described as a radical Christian who always persecuted Muslims, however he was not declared as a missionary.[36] If he was, it was not necessary to neglect this important fact in the Persian sources or the history of the Eastern Church.

Eliah, the eldest son of Ai Xue, inherited his post in *Chongfu Si*. Another proba-

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29 *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 134), 3248-3249; "Fulin Zhongxianwang Shendaobei", *Quan Yuan Wen*, (vol. 535), 324-326; HAN 2000, 93-108.

30 In the 18th year of Zhiyuan Period (1358 AD), Ma Mouhuozhe was appointed *Canzhi Zhengshi* 参知政事. But in the 11th lunar month he resigned the Presidency *Chongfu Si*. *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 113), 2856; SAEKI 1937, 498.

31 MOULE 1930, 228.

32 Translation by Pelliot. See PELLIOT 1912, 497-500.

33 PELLIOT 1914, 639.

34 "Fulin Zhongxianwang Shendaobei", *Quan Yuan Wen,* (vol. 535), 324. "有列邊阿達者以本俗教法受知定宗,薦其賢,召侍左右."

35 WENG 1940, 145-150.

36 YU (trans.) 1998, vol. 2, 347.

ble director of *Chongfu Si,* Ashi kedai 阿實克岱, might be another son of Ai Xue and might have accompanied his father to the Ilkhanate.[37] It was strange that the name of Ashi Kedai was merely recorded in a memorial text by Yao Sui 姚燧,[38] however, and it was not mentioned at all in two biographies of Ai Xue, one being the official biography in *Yuan Shi*, the other being the "Fulin zhongxianwang shendaobei" 拂菻忠獻王神道碑 [Tombstone of Loyal Prince of *Fulin*] by Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫.[39]

Besides the above mentioned figures, there were other two directors of *Chongfu Si,* Dulin Timur 篤麟鐵穆爾 and Liu Zeli 劉則禮. It is still arguable whether they were Christians or not. According to Liu Zeli's biography by Li Jiben 李繼本, Liu was the descendant of the famous Confucian scholar Shentu Zhiyuan 申屠致遠. In the 24th year of the *Zhizheng* Period (1341-1370 AD) Liu was appointed Director of *Chongfu Si* for his military deeds of putting down the peasants' rebellion. It is unlikely that he himself was a Christian.[40]

Timur was a Mongol, his great-grandmother was from Kerait tribe and might be a Christian[41] but it was not clear whether Timur himself was a *Yelikewen* or not. Timur's original name was Yinya Nashuoli 音牙納碩理, Dulin Timur was the name given by Emperor Wenzong 元文宗. He was found extraordinarily handsome among the guardsmen 宿衛 (or Keshigtai 怯薛) at the age of eleven, and then he was put in a series of important posts. These titles included the director of *Chongfu Si* 崇福使, the Ritual Observances Commissioner 太常院使, the Grand Judge of the Court Imperial Clan 大宗正府也可札魯花赤, the Associate Military Affairs Commissioner 知樞密院事, and the Palace Provisions Commissioner 宣徽使, etc.[42]

One fact cannot be ignored when discussing the status of all the above officials: although most directors of *Chongfu Si* were not Christian priests, some even were not Christian, they administered all the affairs of priests and monks and monasteries in China. Comparing the position of priests in the Tang Dynasty, it seemed that the priests and the monks in both Tang and Yuan dynasties were under the supervision and administration of the central govemment. It could be

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37 HAN 1988, 114-115.

38 "Kao Chongfushi Ashi Kedai zhuifeng Qinguogong Zhongyigong zhi"考崇福使阿实克岱追封秦国公忠翊公制 [To Confer the Deceased director of *Chongfu Si* Ashi Kedai the title Duke of *Qin* and *Zhongyi*], *Quan Yuan Wen*, (vol. 300), 360-361.

39 "Fulin Zhongxianwang Shendaobei", *Quan Yuan Wen, (vol. 535),* 325-326.

40 "Liu Zeli Zhuan", *Quan Yuan Wen*, (vol. 1879), 1036-1038...

41 "Zhongshu youchengxiang yunwang shiwenzhong shendaobei"中書右丞相鄆王謚文忠神道碑, *Quan Yuan Wen*, vol. 967, 147. "祖妣怯烈氏諱普顏忽都"

42 "Zhongshu youchengxiang yunwang shiwenzhong shendaobei", 151..

further concluded that *Chongfu Si* had no organizational relations with the Church on the one hand, for its officers were not selected from the priests or missionaries in the Church; on the other hand, the missionary activities of the Church in China should be totally supervised by this Bureau. That is to say, if the institution was held by those who were enthusiastic in Christian faith, the Bureau could play an actual role in supporting the missionary cause in China, but considering the fact that many directors of *Chongfu Si* - especially in the later period of the Yuan Dynasty - were not Christians, its significance in this aspect would greatly decrease.

4. The Religious Service Supervised under Chongfu Si

The first responsibility of *Chongfu Si* was to supervise the ceremonies by the priests and the monks of *Yelikewen*. The medical and interpreting role of *yelikewen* has been valued greatly, while their religious function which was undoubtedly the most significant has not been adequately discussed. The religious role of the court priests, i.e., *mar-hasia* and *rabban*, who belonged to the upper class of *Yelikewen*, was to lead the service of *Gaotian* 告天 (Prayers to Heavenly God), *Zhushou* 祝壽 (Blessing for a long life) and *Qifu* 祈福 (Wishes for good fortunes), as *Yuan Shi* and *Yuan Dian Zhang* point out clearly.

> In the 4th lunar month of the 4th year in the *Zhida* period (1311 AD), in the highest honor of His Majesty, Buddhist monks, Taoists, *Yelikewen* and Dānishmand shall not take the corvée, they shall pray for the God for the long lives.[43] 至大四年四月，欽奉聖旨：和尚、先生、也里可溫、荅失蠻不教當差發，告天咱每根底祝壽者麼道來。

Actually, *Gaotian* and *Zhushou* were the obligations of all religious people in Yuan China. As a repay, they were exempt from civil duties or trade tax. It was considered that the sacrifice service held in the Cross Monastery consisted of these religious rites of *Qifu*, *Zhushou* and *Gaotian*. Little was mentioned about the activities of *mar-hasia* and *rabban* in Chinese documents. Judging from the limited remaining sources, I speculate roughly that the Nestorian rituals in China had been influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism. For example, in the first year of Tianli 天曆 period (1329 AD), Kocho monks 高昌僧 were requested to offer the Buddhist service at Pavilion of Yanchun 延春閣, and at the same time the *Yelikewen* priests were requested to hold a similar service at the Shrine of Empress *Xianyi Zhuangsheng* 顯懿莊聖皇后.[44] Both the Pavilion and the Shrine were associated with the upper Mongolian noblewomen. The former was the main part of the Palace of *Yanchun*, where the emperor's wives and concubines lived; the latter was sacred to Empress *Xianyi Zhuangsheng* 顯懿莊聖 (lit.

[43] *Yuan Dian Zhang*, vol. 33, 1127.
[44] *Yuan Shi*, vol. 32, 711.

the holy virtuous dignified deceased) and belonged to the Imperial Ancestral Temples. It was well known that many imperial women in the Mongol court were Nestorians. The most famous one, Empress *Xianyi Zhuangsheng*, or Sorghaghtani Beki 唆魯禾帖尼, was the wife of Tuluy Khan, the mother of Kublai, Mongke and Hulagu, and was from the famous Nestorian Kerait tribe. Her shrine was neither a chapel nor an imperial church; indeed it was an imperial ancestral temple founded in the early Yuan Dynasty. When the Mongols established the dominion in China, they accepted some Chinese or Confucian rituals for a better adaptation on these grand conquered civilized lands. In the 2nd year of *Zhiyuan* period under Kublai Khan's reign (1265 AD), the Imperial Ancestral Temple was finally set up, with some deceased emperors, empresses and other imperial members being given the honorary posthumous titles and *Zhuangsheng* being the title of Sorghaghtani Begi. As one of the greatest and most powerful women, she helped her sons to be the great Khans and was consequently memorized honorably by the whole empire during the Yuan Dynasty. Later in Wuzong's reign, "*Xianyi*" was added into her posthumous name that formed her complete posthumous title "Empress *Xianyi Zhuangsheng*".[45] Building the imperial ancestral temples and fulfilling the ancestor worship was an important transformation in the ruling pattern after the Mongolians entered the Central Plains of China. The Nestorian sacrifice ceremonies held in this noblest Nestorian Empress Sorghaghtani's temple was influenced by the Chinese rituals.

Empress Sorghaghtani Beki enjoyed great honor among the *Yelikewen* in the Mongol Empire. In the 3rd lunar month, the 1st year during the Later *Zhiyuan* 後至元 period (1336), as *Yuan Shi* recorded: "The Central Ministry asks for the instruction of sacrifice ritual in the Cross Monastery of Ganzhou circuit, Gansu Province, commemorating the honorable Empress Dowager Beqi, the mother of Emperor *Shizu*."[46] Sorghaghtani Beki was undoubtedly the most powerful Nestorian woman in the Mongol Empire. The conduct of cherishing her memorial tablet in the local monastery seemed political and realistic, and it was similar to that in the monastery of Tang China, as recorded by the missionaries in the Xi'an Stele: "The most religious Emperor Hsüan Tsung ordered the prince of Ning-kuo and the four other princes to go in person to the Temple of Happiness to build and set up the altars and courts: "At the beginning of T'ien-pao he ordered Kao Li-shih, the commander in chief, to take the portraits of the five sages (emperors) which were placed in the monastery, and to present a hundred rolls of silk, which were reverently received with salutations to the portrait of wisdom."[47]

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[45] *Yuan Shi*, vol. 74, 1831-1832, 1836.

[46] Ibid, (vol. 38), 826. "甘肅甘州路十字寺奉安世祖皇帝母別吉太后于內，請定祭禮"

[47] "玄宗至道皇帝, 令寧國等五王, 親臨福宇, 建立壇場……，天寶初, 令大將軍搞歷史, 送五聖寫真, 寺內安置, 賜絹百匹, 奉慶睿圖". English translation according to A.C. Moule. See MOULE 1930, 41.

The second responsibility of *Chongfu Si*, as speculated above, was to supervise the cross monasteries around the country. When the institution was led by a devout Christian, it could play a significant role as a pusher and protector for the local missionary cause. In the first year of *Yuanzhen* 元貞 period (1295-1297 AD), Ai Xue, the director of *Chongfu Si,* made an application to the Grand Council to ask for the tax reduction[48] for seven monasteries built by Ma Xuelijisi in Zhenjiang 鎮江 and Hangzhou 杭州.[49] Councilor-in-chief Wan Zhe 完澤, who was from the Kerait tribe and might be a Nestorian,[50] reported to Emperor Chengzong 元成宗 (1294-1307 AD) and obtained a letter of protection under the imperial seal, which was recorded in *Zhishun Zhenjiang Zhi* 至順鎮江志 [*the Gazetteer of Zhenjiang in the period of Zhishun (1330-1333)*] that besides thirty *qing* 頃[51] of official land, thirty-four *qing* of civilian land was further granted to seven temples (the cross monasteries) as their perpetual maintenance.[52] With the support of Wan Zhe and Ai Xue in court, Ma Xuelijisi consequently reduced and postponed paying the tax.[53] As may be imagined, Ma Xuelijisi could not have made such great missionary achievements without the aid from the court. Ai Xue, the director of *Chongfu Si*, played an important role in this event. A counter-evidence was that two of these cross monasteries were attacked by Buddhists afterwards when Wan Ze died in 1303 and Ai Xue died in 1308.[54] In around 1311, two of these cross monasteries, the *Jumingshan* Monastery 聚明山寺 and the *Yunshan* Monastery 雲山寺, were occupied by the Buddhists and were renamed *Prajna* Temple 般若寺. New Buddhist statues were recarved and repainted; furthermore, the crosses inside two monasteries were destroyed by force. In this case, the Buddhist monks were aided by the government, who announced that the offspring of *Yelikewen* were warned not to take back the monasteries, or they would be heavily punished.[55] During the conflict between Buddhists and Christians for three decades, *Yelikewen* failed in the end.

The authority of *Chongfu Si* was limited. It was restricted to the religious affairs and was supervised by the Grand Council and the Censorate, any arrogating conduct being not permitted. One example is recorded in *Yuan Dian Zhang* 元典章:

> In the 7th lunar month of 4th year of the Yanyou 延祐 period (1317 AD), the Provincial Governor had the honor to receive an instruction from the Grand Council

[48] After conquering the South Song Dynasty, the Buddhists, Taoists and *Yelikewen* should pay the land tax. Cf. CHEN 陳垣 1980, 22-24.

[49] YIN 2006, 290-313.

[50] LIU 2001, 16.

[51] 1 *qing* equals 6.67 hectares

[52] *Zhishun Zhenjiang Zhi*, (vol. 9), 366. “奏闻玺书护持，仍拨赐江南官田三十顷，又益置浙西民田三十四顷，为七寺常住”

[53] *Tongzhi TiaogeXiaozhu*, (vol. 29), 720-721.

[54] *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 130), 3173-3174; (vol. 134), 3249-3250.

[55] *Zhishun Zhenjiang Zhi,* (vol.9), 385. “也里可温子子孫孫勿爭，爭者坐罪以重論”

that the imperial Censorate had received a report from the Judicial Commissioner of Huaidong (i.e., the provinces lying in the east of the River Huai), which was as follows: "On the 30th of January of the 4th lunar year of the Yanyou Period, the Imperial gifts were ordered. Hereupon, in the name of the Emperor, Chechedu 彻彻都 and Shansiding 苫思丁 rode four horses to Yangzhou to send forth the incense to the Yelikewen's Cross Monastery and bestowed the silk cloth，wine and other things on the donors of Merit and Virtue. On the second day of the following month, when todqosun 脱脱禾孫[56] (i.e., the officer inspecting the official documents and luggage of the envoy at the courier station of the courier routes) Wu Yexian 吴也先 got the royal decree that carried by Shansiding, the courier of *Chongfu Yuan*, he argued the matter against it that the imperial gifts of wine and sweet wine were not mentioned in the decree at all. According to the sacred command from the Emperor only silk cloth was ordered to be given to Aolahan (奧剌憨 i.e., Abraham) and Lülü 驢驢, the wine was excluded. It shall be informed that every reward and punishment must be carried out appropriately in the way of governing, and with regard to the way of rewards, everything must be put on faithfully of the laws and observance….However, Aolahan was only a *Yelikewen*, with neither literary pursuit worthy of name of culture nor military merits (to deserve such imperial gifts). He was a mere rich tradesman in Yangzhou 揚州 and a very common fellow. It is true that his father had a name for building monasteries, but that was so many years ago. At first, by means of false representations Aolahan managed to be engaged in the service of the public work, and then he begged Hucha 忽察 in *Xuanwei Si* 宣慰司 (Pacification Commission) for undertaking the power to collect the wine taxes. Being greedy by nature and coveting after large profits, he made great fortune at the expense of the people in general. He was then arrested, and was sentenced for fifty-seven lashes after admitting all his crimes. However, he succeeded in presenting a petition to the Throne by making manifest his innocence, and the Emperor benevolently declared the general pardon and remitted Aolahan's punishment. Despite these, he did never share the honor to serve in the presence of His Majesty, nor was he born in a ranking family. The Emperor should neither be informed of the name of this man. Then the *Chongfu Yuan* had transmitted to the officials the sacred command that Shansiding and his men rode four horses to carry two bottles of wine and sweet wine to Yangzhou. Shansiding delivered them (to Aolahan) because he believed they had the honor to receive these things, while it was only a case that people received reward without proper merit, not to mention it was clear that the two bottles of wine and sweet wine were not mentioned in the sacred command at all, and *Chongfu Yuan* had never applied for the imperial wine in advance. Therefore, we delivered the copy of the sacred command and got hold of the instruction letter in question, which had already been reported to the superior authorities and made the case very clear. " Nevertheless, on the 10th of January of the 4th year of the Yanyou period, the very timely imperial proclamation for his pardon was issued…*Chongfu Yuan* was just authorized to award the imperial incense in the name of the Emperor's command which never included

[56] The usage of *todqosun* (in Chinese *tuotuohesun* 脱脱禾孫) here is based on the studies of Cleaves and Mostaert, their transliteration on the term is considered the most accurate. See MOSTAERT-CLEAVES 1952, 436-437; See also DANG 2006, 104-110.

> the wine and sweet wine for Aolahan, and this was illegal with no permission of the Department of *Xuanhui* (Palace Provisions Commission[57]) and the Grand Council. [58]

As mentioned above, *Chongfu Yuan* was sentenced illegal for its wrongly official conduct. All official affairs should be carried out in accordance with laws. Shansiding was sent to Yangzhou in order to award the imperial gifts of silk, wine and incense to Aolahan and Lülü for their great donation to the local Cross Monastery. However, among the imperial gifts the wine and sweet wine were exclusively managed by Department of *Xuanhui* which were therefore called *Xuanhui* wine 宣徽酒 in the Yuan Dynasty. *Chongfu Yuan* had no authority to award *Xuanhui* wine for *Yelikewen* without the permission of the Grand Council and the Department of *Xuanhui*. It seemed very insignificant but really intolerant because of its illegal procedure, even just for two bottles of wine. That's why *Chongfu Yuan* was accused officially by the Judicial Commissioner of Huaidong.

5. The Operation and Cancellation of *Zhangjiao Si*

Now it comes to the issue of local institution *Zhangjiao Si*. In 1315, seventy-two *Zhangjiao Si* or the Office of Christian Affairs around the country were totally abolished, meanwhile *Chongfu Si* was promoted to a higher ranking authority. Besides this recordation there is no further information about *Zhangjiao Si* in official sources. Only two records discovered in an archeological finding and a private epitaph are relevant: one is about Wu Anduonisi 吳咹哆呢思, the chief of *Zhangjiao Si* in Quanzhou circuit 泉州路, and the other about Sao Ma 騷馬 (ie., Sauma), the chief of *Zhangjiao Si* in Jining circuit 濟寧路.[59]

Sao Ma was from Mongolian Qarluq tribe, and his brief biography was recorded in "the Gravestone of Sir *Leshan* 樂善公墓碑". It was said that in the earlier times he was appointed the chief of *Zhangjiao Si* of *Yelikewen*, and in his service period he reconstructed a Cross Monastery for the longevity of the His Majesty.[60] The pronunciation of Sao Ma was the same as that of Sauma, a very common name among Nestorians, which indicated that his Christian name might be Sauma. The Chief of *Zhangjiao Si* was Sao Ma's primary post, which, like the Buddhist official, was usually selected from among the monks. I presume Sao Ma was a monk, probable an abbot, of the local cross monastery in Jining Circuit, therefore he got the post at *Zhangjiao Si* and reconstructed the

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57 HUCKER 1985, 250.

58 Based on the translations by Saeki, the present author re-translate the recordation. See SAEKI 1937, 499-505.

59 ZHANG 2010, 47.

60 Ibid, 47. "管〔領〕也里可溫掌教司官，重修也里可溫寺宇，祝(延)聖壽"

cross monastery later. After *Chongfu Si* had been promoted to *Chongfu Yuan* in 1315, Sauma also lost his post at *Zhangjiao Si*.[61]

Wu Anduonisi [or Antonius] was both the abbot of the *Xingming* Monastery and the chief of *Zhangjiao Si* of Quanzhou. Of course he was appointed this post for his religious status. His name was found in a Chinese-Uighur Nestorian tombstone discovered in Quanzhou, dated in the tenth year of Dade period (1306 AD).[62]

A famous poet Jin Yuansu 金元素, who was also a Nestorian Christian,[63] visited the Cross Monastery of *Xingming* during his official service in Fujian. In one of his poetry "*Ji Daxingming si Yuanming Lieban*" 寄大興明寺圓明列班 [To Rabban Yuanming of the Monastery of Xingming], he wrote a poem as below: "寺門常鎖碧苔深，千載燈傳自苐林"[64] - The entrance of the Monastery is always closed; its steps look green with perennial moss. The altar lamp burns all day long; its flame comes from the shrine of Fulin.

Lieban, or Rabban, was the respectable title for the priests of *Yelikewen*, although nothing was known about this Rabban Yuanming. "Yuanming" is a typical Chinese Buddhist expression, and it was his title "Rabban" that revealed his high status in the Eastern Church and his knowledge of Syriac. It was said that while Fulin was the homeland of Jin Yuansu, it was not the name of an exact place but vaguely referred to the western lands where the flame of *Xingming* Monastery was taken from. *Dengchuan* 燈傳 is a Buddhist term which means the transmission of religious tradition, therefore, it might imply the religious connection between the Monastery of *Daxingming* and its mother Church in West Asia.

The ethnicity of Antonius has not been made clear. He might be a Han-Chinese, or a Uighur or Ongut who was proficient in Chinese literature.[65] However, judging from the ethnicity of *Yelikewen* in Yuan China, it's impossible that Wu Antonius was a Han Chinese.[66] Since he was an abbot of a Cross Monastery, he must be acquainted with Syriac Nestorian sutras and Nestorian rituals, and it was obviously difficult for a local Chinese to grasp such skills. Compared with other Nestorian inscriptions discovered in Quanzhou, especially those carved with Chinese characters, this stele seemed more sinicized in its shape, structure, inscription and expression.

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61 Ibid,47.
62 WU & WU 2005, 419.
63 YIN 2012, 72-73.
64 Quoted in XIAO 1995, 1-14.
65 WU & WU 2005, 418-421.
66 Cf. YIN 2012, 48-121.

For the administrative convenience on local matters of *Yelikewen* and the cross monasteries, a large number of *Zhangjiao Si* were established throughout the country. They probably set the office in the monastery and chose the officials from among the monks, just like the local Buddhist authorities always did. Therefore, the local monasteries got great power in dealing with the missionary affairs. Once the central institution *Chongfu Si* could not supervise *Zhangjiao Si* properly and efficiently, the latter would gradually expanded out of control.

In 1304, the 8th year of Dade 大德 period, Taoists complained to the Department of *Jixian* that *Yelikewen* in Wenzhou circuit set an office to spread their religion and many residents in Wenzhou enlisted themselves as the members of the *Yelikewen* religion in order to elude their civil duties. Besides, *Yelikewen* gradually usurped both the power and the authority of Taoism, and they insisted on preceding the Taoists in both the place and the order when they prayed for the Emperor in sacrifice ceremonies.[67] The complaint was forwarded to the Board of Rites eventually, and the decision was made that since then in the sacrifice ceremonies or other similar occasions the right order should be obeyed strictly that the Buddhists and Taoists should precede those of the *Yelikewen's*.[68]

The religion of *Yelikewen* was competitive. Though it actually emerged in 1270s in the Yangtze River district, in 1310s this religion was able to compete with traditional Taoism. Not only did it strive for the believers but also it preceded the place and order in ritual service. We could discover the intense relations among Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity according to the above-mentioned cases.

One illegality that the Taoist priests accused *Yelikewen* was that the latter enlisted many people to its religion. This was just an excuse from the Taoists' side. Actually, all religions in Yuan China expanded their power and influence by striving for more land and people. Owing to the privilege of no corvée and less tax, the religious people formed a privileged class beyond ethnicity in Yuan China, as Meng Siming 蒙思明 pointed out in his research.[69] In consequence, many secular people, including the wealthy, refugees and beggars, enlisted themselves to one religion so as to avoid their civil duties.[70] It was not rare that people eluded their tax and civil duties in Chinese history; however, such a strategy reached its peak in the Yuan Dynasty.

In 1310 when Emperor Renzong 元仁宗 acceded to the throne, he commanded to abolish the religious offices of Buddhism, Taoism, *Yelikewen*, *Dānishmand*

67 *Yuan Dian Zhang*, (vol. 33), 1143.

68 Ibid, 1144.

69 MENG 2006, 79.

70 Many peasants asked for protection from the church, and they denoted the belongings including the estate to the monastery in order to avoid the heavy tax burden. Cf. MENG 2006, 78-81.

and *Baiyunzong* 白雲宗 so as to increase the government revenue.[71] The offices of *Zhangjiao Si* were abolished during the period. The cause and the consequence of this policy are recorded in *Yuan Dian Zhang*.[72] In the 4th year in the Zhida 至大 period (1311 AD), because the local religious offices of Buddhism, Taoism, *Yelikewen*, Dānishmand, etc., had caused so many administrative problems and juridical chaos, all local offices of them were ordered to be abolished. Only Xuanzheng Yuan (The Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs) and Gongde Si 功德司 (Commission of Merit and Virtue) remained, and the local governors, *Darughachi* 達魯花赤, were authorized to draw back the civil and penal jurisdiction. Buddhist monks, Taoists, *Yelikewen* and *Dānishmand* would not be permitted to hold the post of local petty officials if they did not offer their civil duties. In the 2nd year of Yanyou 延祐 period (1315 AD), all the local Christian affairs were charged directly by the central office *Chongfu Si*. It was in this year that no local *Zhangjiao Si* for *Yelikewen* affairs survived neither did their religious officials.[73]

6. Conclusion

Reviewing each period of Christianity in China, only the Yuan government set up the Bureau to manage Christian affairs separately, and many officials in this Bureau were Christians. Furthermore, there were many Christians among upper Mongols and *semuren* 色目 (i.e., Central Asians) bureaucrats who belonged to the first and the second ruling class. The number of *Yelikewen* in Yuan China, especially in the ruling class, was considerably high that the government must take their benefits and religious rights into concern. Therefore, Yuan Dynasty China witnessed the most tolerant religious policy in China; even the newly-introduced Christianity could attain a higher political status. The support and interests of the ruling class was what the Nestorians in Tang China lacked.

Nevertheless, it should be argued that the founding of *Chongfu Si* was not merely the consequence of the tolerant religious policy or missionary activities of Christian priests; it might be, in my opinion, the result of direct intervening of some senior *semu* Christian officials, like the first director of *Chongfu Si* Ai Xue. On the one hand, *Chongfu Si* was the latest established one among all the religious institutions, and its official posts were never appointed for the priests and missionaries in the church; on the other hand, Ai Xue and his family seemed to be most deeply involved in the operation of *Chongfu Si* during its earlier period. However, after the political collapse of Elijah during the Emperor Wenzong's 文宗 reign (1328-1332 AD),[74] the director positions of *Chongfu Si*

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71 *Yuan Shi*, (vol. 24), 542.

72 *Yuan Dian Zhang*, (vol.33), 1128. "革僧道衙門免差發"

73 Ibid, (vol.33), 1128..

74 *Yuan Shi*, (vol.34), 761; TU 1988, 712.

were no longer occupied by Ai Xue's family. In 1340s, Dulin Timur, who was a minion of the Emperor Huizong 元惠宗 (順帝), was appointed the director of *Chongfu Si*, he himself might probably be a Christian, for his great-grandmother was from the Kerait tribe. During the final period of the Yuan Dynasty, it seemed that the institution of *Chongfu Si* existed nominally, the last director Liu Zeli was not a Christian but from a Chinese Confucian family.

Supervision on the religious rituals held by *mar-hasia* and *rabban* in the cross monasteries was the basic responsibility of *Chongfu Si*. When it was led by a devout Christian, it could probably play a vital role in protecting the local missionary activities. However, it was not easy to administer all the monasteries in such a big country, therefore, based on the managerial demand on the local cross monasteries, the offices of *Zhangjiao Si* were founded. Usually they were set inside the local cross monastery for the convenience of management, and the abbots were appointed the chiefs of *Zhangjiao Si* in general, which was the same as the monk official system of Buddhism. The secularity of *Chongfu Si* has been primarily explored in operational and official aspects. As a secular governmental authority, the officials of *Chongfu Si* did not have to be selected from the priests or missionaries in the Church. Although it was engaged in the religious rituals for the ruling class, the missionary career in China was not its obligation, even it had ever provided great support for the cross monasteries and had helped them to attain more developing opportunities, especially during the service of Ai Xue.

I speculate that *Zhangjiao Si* played a more practical part. As the institution dealing with the local Christian affairs, the religious officials of *Zhangjiao Si* were mostly selected from the senior monks especially the abbots of the local cross monasteries, like a Buddhist Chief of Buddhism, The Chief of *Zhangjiao Si* was possibly an honorable post, yet it actually grasped much autonomy power. In consequence, it was very common that *Zhangjiao Si* took in many people for development. With the conversion to Christianity of these people - even the amount of converts was not actually large - they succeeded in expanding the religious influence and gaining economic benefit.

It reveals two different religious administrative levels in Yuan China. On the upper level, *Chongfu Si* offered the religious services for the ruling class and supervised the local cross monasteries; it didn't devote itself to the missionary activities. While on the lower level, with the political, economic and religious profits relating to the missionizing activities directly, *Zhangjiao Si* benefited from the expansion of the local cross monasteries and had played a more practical role. However, it was not clear when *Zhangjiao Si* was set up, supposing it was in 1289, the year that *Chongfu Si* was founded, it took only two decades to run the local Christian offices before the year of 1315. During such a short period the number of *Zhangjiao Si*, which was equal to or more than that of the

cross monasteries in China, had amounted to seventy-two. *Zhangjiao Si* and local cross monasteries had proved their missionary energy convincingly. Unfortunately, with the direct intervention of the government, this provincial power and vitality came to an end. In 1315, these seventy-two offices of *Zhangjiao Si* were thoroughly abolished; meanwhile *Chongfu Si* was promoted to the *Chongfu Yuan*. It means that *Yelikewen* kept their influence and authority on the upper level, but the missionary energy and self-development in the local regions decreased and gradually faded.

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PRIESTS OF *JINGJIAO* IN THE XIZHOU UIGHUR KINGDOM (FIVE DYNASTIES - THE EARLY SONG PERIOD)

WANG Yuanyuan
Sun Yat-sen University, China

The Uighur Kingdom on the Mongolian Steppe was destroyed by the Kirghiz in 840. The invasion caused a diaspora of Uighur people in the Qarluq and the Tibetan regions, in the Central Plains and in Kuča. The Uighurs relocated along the north rim of the Tarim Basin such as Kuča, Karashahr and Gaochang (Qočo) established in the 850s a new Khanate around the Turfan region, which was named Xizhou Uighur Kingdom (866-1209) in the Chinese historical sources. A large amount of Manichaean manuscripts unearthed from Turfan show that Manichaeism maintained its position as a state religion of the Uighurs in the decades after the establishment of the new Khanate. Gaochang, however, as a hodgepodge place with interweaving cultural elements from the West and the East, was always an ideal breeding ground for various kinds of religions and beliefs. The text on the verso of a Dunhuang manuscript S.6551 is a so-called *Jiangjingwen* (i.e. a text of Buddhist teaching lecture for the folks) of an unknown Buddhist master who gave the lecture in Gaochang. It shows various religions that existed side by side in the territory of the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom during the period of the Five Dynasties (907-960).

Scholars have made detailed researches on S.6551 which can be dated around the year 930 AD. In the manuscript, the Buddhist master commenced the preaching with a narration of his pilgrimage and his high praise to the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom, the royal family and the boom of Buddhism there. He then criticized some non-Buddhist sects in the Kingdom and finally got to the point expounding the Sutra on the Buddha Amitabha. Here is his criticism of several non-Buddhist sects:

且如西天有九十六種外道，此間則有波斯、摩尼、火祆、哭神之輩，皆言我已出家，永離生死，並是虛誑，欺謾人天，唯有釋迦弟子是其出家，堪受人天廣大供養。[1]

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[1] Cf. ZHANG 張廣達 & RONG 榮新江 1989, 24-36.

Translation:
There are 96 tirthakas[2] in the West, while followers of the Persian religion, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism and a belief of crying God are active in this land. They all claim to be entering into the religion and out of the cycle of life and death, but it's all lies and merely deception to the heaven and earth. Only the followers of Sakyamuni who are eligible for the offerings from the heaven and earth can be viewed as entering into a real religion.

I agree with the viewpoint of Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang that the so-called Persian religion is *Jingjiao* and the belief of crying God may be Shamanism. The preaching master's severe critique on the heretics apparently indicates that non-Buddhist sects prevailed in the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom during the period of the Five Dynasties. Among them, the Persian religion was active at least from the 930s to the end of the 10th century because a "Persian tirthaka" was recorded in the Chinese sources concerning tribute paying to the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127).

龜茲，回鶻之別種也·其國主自稱師子王，戴寶裝裝冠，著黃色衣，與宰相九人，同理國事·每出，其宰相著大食國錦彩之衣，騎馬前引，常以音樂相隨·其妃名阿斯迷，著紅羅縷金之衣，多用珠寶嚴飾其身，每年一度出宮游看國城·有市井而無錢貨，但以花蕊布牙換博買米、麥、瓜果，與中國無異·西至大食國，兩月程，東至夏州，三月程·或稱西州回鶻，或稱西州龜茲，又稱龜茲回鶻，其實一也·（太宗太平興國元年，976）五月，西州龜茲遣使易難與婆羅門、波厮外道來貢.[3]

Translation:
The Kuča Kingdom is an offshoot of the Uighurs. The king calls himself Aslan [i.e. the Lion King]. He wears yellow robes and a crown encrusted with gems, and conducts state affairs together with his nine Prime Ministers. When the king marches out, the Prime Ministers in Arabic damask clothes usually ride at the head of the royal procession in music. The queen Asimi, in red silky dress with gold thread, often decorated herself with pearls and jewels. She goes out of the palace strolling about the capital once a year. There are markets in this Kingdom, but no currency. Like the business method in China, people there exchange rice, wheat, fruits and melons with cloths. It takes two months traveling westwards from this Kingdom to the Arab Empire, and three months going eastwards to the Prefecture of Xiazhou. This Kingdom can be named as Xizhou

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[2] Manuscript S.6551 is a Buddhist *Jiangjingwen* and the lecturer is a Buddhist master. Considering the religious attribute of the text and the religious identity of the lecturer, I'd like to use the Sanskrit word "tirthaka" to literally translate the Chinese expression "Waidao"外道 here.

[3] *Songhuizao Gao* (abbreviated as *SHYJG* thereafter) 宋會要輯稿, 7720. [English translation is given by the present author.]

Uighurs, Xizhou Kuča or Kuča Uighurs, no difference at all. In May (of 976 AD, the first year of Taipingxingguo era of Taizong Emperor), Xizhou Kuča sent an envoy named Yinan, together with a Brahmin and a Persian tirthaka to pay tribute.

As we all know, Xizhou and Kuča are different oasis towns. But the records of the Northern Song Dynasty concerning Xizhou Uighur Kingdom usually confused them, even considering them as one. The Uighurs moving westward after the year of 840 had a powerful control over the north rim of the Tarim Basin. It may be the poor communications between China proper and the Western Regions that made the Northern Song Dynasty mistakenly treat Xizhou and Kuča as one regime — the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom in question. Such confused recordation leaves some modern scholars in continuous discussion about whether Xizhou Uighurs and Kuča Uighurs is the same Kingdom or not. The academic divergence, in any case, has no influence on our analysis of the Persian tirthaka's identity of the year 976.

The Background of the Persian Tirthaka

As to the Persian tirthaka, we'd better make a full consideration of both his identity and background. According to the records, the Persian tirthaka came to Kaifeng together with Yinan (most likely ināl in Turkish[4]), an envoy of Xizhou Uighur, and a Brahmin. Yinan served as an envoy to the Northern Song Dynasty twice, that's in 976 and in the 9th year of Taipingxingguo era (984 AD).

[太平興國]九年[984]五月，西州回鶻與婆羅門及波斯外道阿里煙朝貢。錫賚有差，館於禮賓院。西州奉使易難具道本國主稱號、服飾、習尚、風俗、城邑、道里，一如龜茲國。其婆羅僧，號永世，亦具道本國事。[5]

Translation:
In May of the 9th year [of Taipingxingguo era], Xizhou Uighur, a Brahmin and a Persian Tirthaka named Aliyan paid tributes. They were all granted various rewards by the court accordingly and arranged accommodation in *Libin Yuan* [a reception office of the central government]. Yinan, an envoy from Xizhou makes a report about his king's title, costume, habitude, customs, cities and routes, which are the same as those of Kuča. The Brahmin named Yongshi also gives a narration about his own country.

雍熙元年[AD 984]四月，西州回鶻與婆羅門僧永世，波斯外道阿里煙同入貢。[6]

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4 DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2004, 99.
5 *SHYJG*, 7719. [English translation is given by the present author.]
6 *SS* 宋史, vol.490, 14114. [English translation is given by the present author.]

Translation:
In April of the first year of Yongxi era [984], Xizhou Uighur together with a Brahmin named Yongshi and a Persian Tirthaka named Aliyan paid tribute at the same time.

又有婆羅門僧永世与波斯外道阿里煙同至京師·永世自言：本國名利得，國王姓牙羅五得，名阿喏你口縛 [注：口+縛]，衣黄衣，戴金冠，以七寶为飾·出乘象或肩輿，以音樂螺鈸前道，多游佛寺，博施貧乏·其妃曰摩訶你，衣紬縷金紅衣，歲一出，多所振施·人有冤抑，俟王及妃出游，即迎隨申訴·署國相四人，庶務並委裁制·五穀、六畜、果實與中國無異·市易用銅錢，有文漫圓徑，如中國之制，但實其中心，不穿貫耳·其國東行，經六月至大食國，又二月至西州，又二月至夏州·阿里煙自云：本國王號黑衣，姓張，名哩里沒，用錦彩為衣，每游獵，三二日一還國·署大臣九人治國事·男子以白疊布為衣，婦人豪富者著大食國錦綺，貧下止服絹布·種陸田，而無稻糯·土宜絲蠶、羊馬、果實·無錢貨，以雜物貨易·永世、阿里煙，太平興國九年與西州回鶻同來·[7]

Translation:
And a Brahmin named Yongshi and a Persian tirthaka named Aliyan arrive in the capital city at the same time. Yongshi claims that his country's name is Lide. The king's surname is Yaluowude, and his first name is Anuonibu. He wears yellow robes and a golden crown encrusted with seven gems. He goes out by elephant or in palanquin, with music and the sound of conch and cymbal ushering the way. He always visits Buddhist temples and offers almsgiving generously to the poor. The queen's name is Mahani, wearing red silky dress with gold thread. She goes out of the palace once a year and often makes provision of relief. Taking the occasion of the king and the queen's outing, people can lodge appeals for the wrongs they suffered. Four Prime Ministers conduct the state affairs. Five cereals, six domestic animals and fruits there are the same as those in China. People trade with a kind of copper coins which are also similar to Chinese coins, but without a hole being punched in the center. It takes six months traveling eastwards from this Kingdom to the Arab Empire, then another two months to Xizhou, and another two months again to Xiazhou. Aliyan claims that his king's epithet is Black Robe, whose surname is Zhang and first name is Lilimo. The king wears colored damask robes. He always returns to the capital city in two or three days every time he goes out for hunting. Nine Prime Ministers conduct the state affairs. Men dress in cotton clothes and rich women in Arabic damask, while the poor wears silky clothes. The Kingdom is featured with silkworms, sheep, horses and fruits, but no rice growing there. People trade

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7 *SHYJG*, 7758. [English translation is given by the present author.] Same records can also be found in *SS*, vol.490, 14105-14106.

on a barter basis because there is no currency. Yongshi and Aliyan arrive in the capital city at the 9th year of Taipingxingguo era together with an envoy from the Xizhou Uighur.

The paragraphs cited above reveal that Yinan, a Persian tirthaka Aliyan and a Brahmin Yongshi came to Kaifeng in 984. We can easily find out that the Persian tirthaka and the Brahmin of 976 were exactly Aliyan and Yongshi. Yinan is undoubtedly an envoy from the Uighurs, while the ambiguous records concerning Aliyan and Yongshi make us hesitate to decide where they were from. According to the materials, Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan gave accounts of their own countries' customs and practices respectively. So there is a question: the three were all from Xizhou Uighur Kingdom or from different countries but encountering on the way and then traveling together to Kaifeng? First, we have to deal with a Chinese word "Benguo 本國 (i.e.their own countries)" which is somewhat equivocal in meaning. It can be interpreted as the country sending them to Kaifeng or their mother countries. If the latter one can be accepted, the background of Yongshi and Aliyan is easy to be settled: They immigrated from their mother countries to Xizhou, and three of them were all sent from the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom. But if "Benguo" means the country sending them to Kaifeng, the problem becomes complicated.

Since the three all mentioned their own countries, Yinan's country should be the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom and Brahmin Yongshi's motherland might be somewhere in India. As to the Persian tirthaka Aliyan, his homeland might be the Abbasid Empire in West Asia because there was no Persia in the 10th century at all. This speculation can also be supported by Aliyan's self-description that his king's epithet is Black Robe. Then, it's seemingly the case that the three came from different countries, just happening to meet halfway and came to Kaifeng together. But after analyzing and comparing their individual descriptions of the customs, people can notice the contents are almost the same—their kings all wearing yellow robes and crowns encrusted with gems, their queens all in red silky dress with gold thread, going out of the palace once a year, and four or nine Prime Ministers helping to conduct the state affairs—only in different narrative sequences.

It's generally known that the Islamic Abbasids, the Indian and the Uighur Kingdom stood far apart, and had totally different historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. It's really a puzzle that these countries shared so many similarities. Moreover, it's hard to believe in the coincidence that Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan always chanced to meet halfway on the long trip almost spanning the continent. Therefore, either the Chinese recorder of the Northern Song Dynasty or Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan themselves might be responsible for the puzzling reports of the three countries. Probably, the Chinese recorder took a wrong dictation from Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan, so he had to fabricate their reports af-

terwards. Alternatively, the three were actually all from the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom, and it's difficult for Yongshi and Aliyan to give accurate reports about Arabia and India and have to do adaption based on the version of Uighur's customs.

In the Northern Song Dynasty, *Zhuke Langzhong* 主客郎中 and *Yuanwailang* 員外郎, the professional officials of Li Bu (禮部 the Ministry of Rites) were responsible for recording the customs of the tributary states.[8] If they failed to write down what the envoys said on the spot, they could just make further confirmation with the envoys and fix the omission afterwards. Namely, fabricating was not necessary at all. Furthermore, except for most of the similarities, we can still find some slight distinctions in the respective narrations of Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan, which couldn't be a sheer fabrication by Chinese officials. Considering the reception policy of Chinese dynasties towards the tributary countries, I'm inclined to believe that the three were all sent from the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom. It's very likely that they intentionally highlighted their different and faraway native lands with an attempt to gain the maximum profit from the Chinese government.

From ancient times, foreign countries, especially those faraway ones could usually get high profits from China through tributary trade. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the government, as a rule, gave the tributary countries returns according to the distance. In the Northern Song Dynasty, the routine was granting the tributary countries with much more generous reward,[9] such as honorable titles and substantial gifts to the kings and envoys etc.[10] In 1083, a country named Centan 層檀 (nowadays Zanzibar Island and the neighboring coastal area of East Africa) sent envoy to China, and Emperor Shenzong (r.1067-1085) rewarded extra only for its long distance from China.[11] In addition, Chinese government also reimbursed the envoys for their travelling expenses according to the distance. To sum up, profitable return is most attractive for foreign countries, and the more distant country it was, the more gifts it could be awarded by Chinese emperors. With such preferential policy, foreign envoys and merchants poured into the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty in the name of tribute paying. It then became a heavy financial burden to the court which had to impose restrictions on tribute-paying and reward-granting during the period of Yuanfeng era to Shaosheng era (1078-1098). As we've known, Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan "were all granted various rewards by the court accordingly". It's not very certain whether "accordingly" can be explained as "according to the distance". But it's well-reasoned for Yongshi and Aliyan, with the religious identities as Brahmin and Persian tirthaka, to claim they came from faraway India and

8 *SS*, vol.163, 3854.
9 *SS*, vol.485, 13981.
10 Cf. LI 李雲泉 2004, 43, 50.
11 *SS*, vol.490, 14123.

the West Asia because they could only obtain advantages for doing that. In my opinion, it's not very convincing to put the blame on Chinese officials' taking a wrong dictation from the envoys. More likely, Yongshi and Aliyan disguised themselves as messengers from India and the Abbasid Caliphate probably for gaining more returns. Residing in the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom and being unfamiliar with the instant situation of their homelands, Yongshi and Aliyan had to copy the Uighur's customs and made the report in the Court.

Additionally, I want to mention a diplomatic mission sent by the Northern Song Dynasty to Xizhou Uighur Kingdom in the 6th year of Taipingxingguo era (981). As the Chinese envoy, Wang Yande 王延德 left for Gaochang in May of 981. When he set out on his return journey two years later, countries of the Western Regions sent messengers together with him for expressing thanks to the Chinese emperor's favor. They also arrived in the capital city of Kaifeng in 984.[12] The coincidence of timing indicates that Yinan, Yongshi and Aliyan were probably the messengers coming to China together with Wang Yande. It's known that Wang visited the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom only, never going further to India or the West Asia. So it's illogical for Yongshi and Aliyan to pay a return visit to China as messengers from India and the Abbasid Empire. In fact, they were all from Xizhou together with Yinan. This opinion can be strengthened through further discussion about the identity of Aliyan as a Persian tirthaka.

The Religious Identity of the Persian Tirthaka

Though Aliyan was called Persian tirthaka by the Northern Song Dynasty, Persia was actually the Abbasid Empire at that time. Considering the religions in the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom where Aliyan lived, one can easily identify him was not a Moslem. In *Hudud al-Alam* originally finished in 982, the Islamic writer mentioned Nestorian Christianity and Zoroastrianism were popular among the Uighurs, but saying nothing about Islam.[13] Perhaps, there's no Islam in the Xizhou Uighur Kingdom around the year of 982. Similar records can be found in Wang Yande's *Xizhou Shichengji* 西州使程記 (*Travel Notes on Xizhou*) on his visiting from 981-984. Wang says there were Manichaean priests and Persian monks in Xizhou which were the so-called tirthakas in Buddhist Sutras.[14] Here, the Persian monks are believed as Nestorians. Since Persian religion and Persian monks in above sources dated the 10th century all refer to *Jingjiao*, the Persian tirthaka Aliyan should be a priest of *Jingjiao*.

Nestorian Christianity in Tang China was called *Jingjiao*, but Chinese people used to relating the religion with Persia even from the very beginning. Though

[12] *SS*, vol.490, 14113.
[13] *Hudud al-Alam* (Chinese translation by WANG 王治來 Zhilai 2010), 68-71.
[14] *Hui ZhuLu* 揮麈錄(前錄 former section), vol.4, 37.

it's unknown how Alopen introduced himself and his religion to Emperor Taizong (r. 626-649), in the imperial edict issued in 638 he was identified as a Persian monk.[15] Imaginably, Chinese people linked *Jingjiao* with Persia because Persia was Alopen's motherland and the headquarters of *Jingjiao*. In the 2nd year of Kaiyuan era (714), a priest of *Jingjiao* named Jilie 及烈 (maybe identified with a Christian name "Gabriel") who presented various articles with strange devises to the Emperor was also recorded as Persian monk.[16] In the edict of the 4th year of Tianbao era (745), *Jingjiao* was named "the Persian religion of the scriptures" 波斯經教, while its monastery was called "Persian monastery 波斯寺".[17] After the edict of 745, the name of "Persian monastery" was officially announced to be changed into "Daqin monastery 大秦寺". And *Jingjiao*, the self-addressed Chinese name was formally shown on the Xi'an Monument erected in 781. The rule relating *Jingjiao* with Persia, however, was still kept. In the period of Zhenyuan (785-805), a famous bishop Jingjing 景淨 who translated Buddhist sutra together with Buddhist monks was still viewed as a Persian monk.[18]

On the contrary, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism, another two religions from Persia were never labeled as "made in Persia" in the Tang and Song dynasties. From the Sogdian Ancient Letters found by A. Stein in a watchtower near Dunhuang to the Sogdian settlements and funeral customs of the Northern dynasties (386-581) and the Sui-Tang period (581-907), it can be safely concluded that the spread of Zoroastrianism in China is attributed to the Sogdians who acted as transmitters and followers. In this case, Chinese people can hardly treat Zoroastrianism as a "Persian religion". Besides, Zoroastrianism had a Chinese name, that is, Xianjiao 祆教, with the character "祆" being created in the Chinese language at the turn of the Sui and Tang dynasties.[19] This name was continuously in use until the Song Dynasty, and Zoroastrianism was never called the "Persian religion" according to existing sources.

Manichaeism was formally introduced into China by a Persian bishop (MP aftādān) in 694. It seems as if Manichaeism also stands a chance of gaining the name of "Persian religion". But Manichaeism in Tang China was thought to be stemmed directly from the church in Central Asia,[20] and the Sogdians again contributed a lot to the development of Manichaeism in China. More importantly, it's shown from the materials concerning Manichaeism of Tang China such

15 *THY* 唐會要, vol.49, 864.

16 *THY*, vol.62, 1078.

17 *THY*, vol.49, 864.

18 *Zhenyuan xinding Shijiao Mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄[Newly Established Catalog of the Buddhist Teaching of the Zhenyuan Era (785-805)] vol.17, *Taishō Tripitaka* (vol.55), 892.

19 CHEN 陳垣 1980, 308, 312.

20 LIN 林悟殊 1997,69.

as the Dunhuang manuscripts and the prohibition edict issued by Emperor Xuanzong (r.712-756) in 732 that the people of Tang called the religion Monijiao 摩尼教 all the way, never linking it with Persia. This name remained unchanged in the Song Dynasty. There is an important record: More than ten years ago before Aliyan's visit, Khotan sent Manichaean master as envoy to Kaifeng in the 2nd year of Jianlong era (962), bringing two decorative glass bottles and a piece of brocade as tribute.[21] Apparently, describing the envoy of Khotan as "Manichaean master" reveals that the envoy was different in religious identity from Aliyan in the eyes of the Chinese officials. In other words, Aliyan was certainly not a Manichaean priest.

Generally speaking, in the Chinese sources of the Tang Dynasty, *Jingjiao*, the priest and the temple of *Jingjiao* are usually recorded as "Persian religion", "Persian monk" and "Persian monastery". The information about Aliyan proves this rule was followed in the period of Five Dynasties and early Song Dynasty. Furthermore, the fact that Aliyan was a priest of *Jingjiao* strengthens the viewpoint that he came from Gaochang, not Kuča. Archaeological finds can also be quoted as a proof. In the early 20th Century, Nestorian monastery ruins and manuscripts were found in Turfan by the German expeditions, but no acknowledged Nestorian remains were found in Kuča so far. Aliyan is not a typical Uighur or Turkic name. As an immigrant in Gaochang, he may be from Sogdiana[22]or West Asia.

The Stereotype of *Jingjiao* as Tirthaka in the Tang-Song Period

Coincidentally, the preaching Buddhist master describes *Jingjiao*, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism and Shamanism as tirthakas in the text of manuscript S.6551, and Wang Yande and the officials of the Ministry of Rites of the Northern Song Dynasty also blacklist *Jingjiao* as tirthaka. Such image is not shaped in Gaochang, because Wang and the officials are not natives of Gaochang, and the unknown preaching master is also just a passing pilgrim. In S.6551, the master gives no hint about his background, only offering details on his pilgrimage. He first worships Bodhisattva Manjusri on Wutai Mountain, then travels westward to Khotan paying respect to Niutou Moutain (hgehu-to-can in Tibetan). Being in poor health, he is stranded in Gaochang and unable to go on his journey to India. Such details reveal that he is neither from Gaochang, the Central Plains nor Khotan. Both Wutai Mountain and Niutou Moutain were famous shrines for Bodhisattva Manjusri in the period of Five Dynasties and early Song Dynasty, and the pilgrimage to Wutai Mountain had emerged with great zeal in northwest China since 924 AD.[23] Maybe, the preaching master is from somewhere in northwest China or north China.

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21 *SS*, vol.490, 14106.

22 Cf. CHEN 陳懷宇 1999, 196.

23 RONG 榮新江 1996, 248-260.

In his *Travel Notes on Xizhou*, Wang Yande stresses Manichaean and Persian monks are "the so-called tirthakas in Buddhist Sutras". Therefore, treating Manichaeism and *Jingjiao* as tirthakas is a general attitude of Buddhists in the Central Plains. In early Song Dynasty, the extant book with detailed information concerning the three Persian religions is *Dasong Sengshi Lue* 大宋僧史略 (*Buddhist Historiography in the Song Dynasty*) written by Zan Ning 贊寧 (919-1001). He wrote this book under the imperial order in 978, almost contemporary with Wang Yande. But Zan Ning completely confused Xianjiao (i.e.Zoroastrianism), *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism:

貞觀五年，有傳法穆護何祿，將祆教詣闕聞奏・勅令長安崇化坊立祆寺，號大秦寺，又名波斯寺・開元二十年八月十五日勅："末尼本是邪見，妄稱佛教，誑惑黎元・以西胡等既是師法，當身自行，不須科罰・"至天寶四年七月勅："波斯經教，出自大秦・傳習而來，久行中國・爰初建寺，因以為名・將欲示人，必循其本・其兩京波斯寺，宜改為大秦寺・天下諸州郡有者準此・"大曆三年六月勅："回紇置寺，宜賜額大雲光明之寺・"六年正月又勅荊、越、洪等州，各置大雲光明寺一所。[24]

Translation:
In the 5th year of Zhenguan (631), a missionary Magus He Lu presented Xianjiao to the court and reported to the Emperor. An imperial edict was then issued to establish a temple of Xianjiao in Chonghua Ward of Chang'an, which [was] also named Daqin temple or Persia temple. A decree dated August 15th of the 20th year of Kaiyuan era said: *Momoni* (i.e.Manichaeism) is basically a perverse belief. It fraudulently assumes to be Buddhism and misleads the people. Since it's an indigenous religion of the Western Barbarian and other foreigners, its followers will not be punished if they practice it among themselves. In July of the 4th year of Tianbao era, a decree was issued: the Persian religion of the scriptures was started in Daqin. Having been preached and practised, it has long existed in the Middle Kingdom. When they first built monasteries, (Persia) was consequently taken for the name. Wishing to show men the necessity of correct knowledge of the original (we decree that) the Persian Monasteries in the two Capitals are to be changed to Daqin Monasteries. Those which are founded in all the prefectures of the Empire will also observe this. A decree of June of the 3rd year of Dali era said: the temples established by the Uighurs will be granted the title Dayun Guangming. In the first month of the lunar year of the 6th year of Dali era, a decree was issued to establish Dayun Guangming temples in the prefectures of Jingzhou, Yuezhou and Hongzhou respectively.

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24 *Dasong Seng Shilv* 大宋僧史略, *Taishō Tripitaka* (vol.54), 253. [English translation is given by the present author.]

As a famous Buddhist historian at that time, Zan Ning must have compiled the book based on the sources of the Tang Dynasty. Though it is rich in information, it gives totally confused and misleading records. By contrast, Wang Yande's knowledge about the Persian religions is quite correct and he can distinguish and identify *Jingjiao* from Manichaeism accurately as the tirthakas in Buddhist classics. Wang Yande should have access to some lost Buddhist works with more accurate information about the Persian religions.

In fact, the hostile attitude of viewing both *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism as tirthakas reminds us of the content of *Lidai Fabao Ji* (歷代法寶記 *Records of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations*), a Zen Buddhist work of the Tang Dynasty. In it, *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism are blacklisted as two tirthakas: Mishihe (i.e.Messiah 彌施訶) and Momanni (末曼尼 probably Mār Mani).[25] *Lidai Fabao Ji* is finished not long after 774 by Baotang school 保唐派 of Zen Buddhism prevailed in present Sichuan area. The enmity between Baotang school and *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism can be traced back to the period of the An Lushan Rebellion (755-763) when they all preached religions and made converts in the Shuofang Army 朔方軍 quartered in northwest China. There are as yet no other works of Zen Buddhism naming both *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism as tirthakas except *Lidai Fabao Ji*, which means such dyslogistic appellation is original with Baotang school.[26] As we have known, *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism were regarded as tirthakas by both Chinese monks and commoners in the 10th century. Though there is no strong evidence to show that the image of tirthaka was directly shaped or inherited from *Lidai Fabao Ji*, the effect of this book cannot be ignored at any rate. In general, the bias of the Buddhists viewing *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism as tirthakas in the Tang Dynasty deeply influenced Chinese monks and commoners in the period of Five Dynasties and early Song Dynasty. Perhaps in the Song Dynasty, some Buddhist works or some monks still held or advocated such bias, thus the impression of *Jingjiao* and Manichaeism as tirthakas lingered among the people.

Supplementary Notes

Jingjiao was regarded as tirthaka out of Gaochang, but it was a legal religion in Gaochang. A priest of *Jingjiao* could even be honored as an official envoy, although it is rare for such a thing. Of course, the special identity and position of Aliyan cannot be a testimony to the great development of *Jingjiao* in Xizhou Uighur Kingdom of the 10th century. But not as Manichaeism experiencing a series of ups and downs, *Jingjiao* in Gaochang developed steadily and smoothly.

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25 *Lidai Fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 [Records of the Dharma-Jewel through the Generations], *Taishō Tripitaka* (vol.51), 180.

26 Cf. RONG 1999, 130-150.

Jingjiao in the Central Plains was persecuted and its priests were expelled after Emperor Wuzong's Huichang persecution (842-845), but the religion itself was not eradicated and it survived in the Hebei region and in south China after the Tang period.[27] It is believed that under the deportation order, some priests went down and gathered in present Canton area with an attempt to return home by sea.[28] So there is also a possibility that someone fled to the Western Regions or plan to return to homeland via the Silk Road. Anyway the priests of *Jingjiao* from the Central Plains found refuge in northwest China, thus developing a boom of the missionary works there. A bilingual letter (Or.8212:86) in Sogdian and Turkish from Dunhuang discloses the relationship between the followers of *Jingjiao* in Gaochang and those in Dunhuang within the 9th and the 10th centuries. In the 19th century, some tombstones of *Jingjiao* were found in Semiriče region, four of which dated 858, 911, 1186 and 1201 respectively.[29] The followers in Semiriče were active from the 9th to the 14th centuries. They were probably Arghus, a kind of half-blooded tribe-man of Sogdian and Turkish.[30] Coincidentally, a Turkish manuscript (T II D 171, present III 198) of the 9th century shows there were many Manichaean followers among the Arghus who were controlled by the Manichaean church in Gaochang.[31] Therefore, we can imagine the churches of *Jingjiao* in Gaochang and Semiriče should have some relations in a certain period.

Though *Jingjiao* in the Western Regions had limited social influence in the 9th-10th centuries, it took root in several important oasis towns along the Silk Road, and communities in these towns kept close contact with each other. According to an Arabian writer al-Nadim's *Kitab al Fihrist*, in the year 987, a priest from Najran who seven years before had been sent by the Catholicos to China said that "Christianity was just extinct in China; the native Christians had perished in one way or another; the church which they had used had been destroyed; and there was only one Christian left in the land."[32] What the priest of Najran said was apparently not the religious situation in the Western Regions. It is most likely that he traveled to China by sea and visited either the Central Plains, regions of the Yangtze River or the Canton area. Thus he was depressed by the gloomy picture of *Jingjiao* in China. If he had paid a visit to the Western Regions at that time, he would not have been so disappointed.

27 Cf. WANG 王媛媛 2013, 279-296.
28 Cf. LUO 羅香林 1966, 76-77.
29 SAEKI 1943, 548, 554-555, 567.
30 Cf. HE 何啟龍 2010, 115-133.
31 WANG 2012, 31-43.
32 DODGE 1970, 836-837.

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Liturgical Tradition
& Theological Reflections

LOST IN TRANSCRIPTION? – THE THEOLOGICAL VOCABULARY OF CHRISTIAN TEXTS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND CHINA[*]

Samuel N. C. LIEU
Macquarie University, Australia

Introduction

The English language, thanks to its long association with Christianity, has assimilated a large number of loanwords from Greek and Aramaic (often through their Latin forms) we have generally taken for granted and which have also passed imperceptibly into everyday use, e.g.:

Alleluia (<Hebr. *halleluyah* 'Praise the Lord (Yah) via Lat. *alleluia* <Gr. ἀλληλουϊά) now a joyful acclaim or sigh of relief.
Armageddon (<Hebr.? *via* Gr. Ἀρμαγεδών originally a cryptic name) now used to mean 'Final Day'
Babel (<Hebr. via Lat. *Babel*) prob. from Assyr. *bab-ilu* 'gate of God' now used to mean 'noisey assembly'
Bible (<Lat. *biblia* <Gr. βύβλος 'papyrus-plant, *hence* book') now often used to mean an authoritative publication or standard reference book.
Exodus (<Lat. Exodus <Gr. ἔξοδος 'going out, expedition') now used of an exit of a large number of people.
Hosanna (<Hebr. *hoshi'-ana* 'save, pray' *via* Lat. *Hosanna* <Gr. ὡσαννά) now used to signify a cry of adoration, a shout of joy.
Paradise (<Lat. *Paradisus* <Gr. παράδεισος <OIr. Av. *pairidaêza* 'walled-around (garden)') now used to indicate any form of exceptionally pleasant existence or experience.

The last example is deliberately chosen to show the long road travelled by religious terms. Few would think of the term 'paradise' as a loan-word from Greek via Latin let alone from Old Iranian.
Anglophone churches of all denominations, but more particularly the Catholic and the High Anglican, sometimes maintain the use of certain liturgical terms and phrases of Greek or Latin origin such as:

Agape (<Gr. ἀγαπή) 'Love (Feast)'
Agnus Dei (<Lat.) 'Lamb of God'
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Lat. 'Glory to God in the highest')

Jubilate Deo (Lat. 'Rejoice in God')
Kyrie Eleison (Gr. Κύριε, ἐλέησον 'Lord, have mercy')

An average Anglophone Christian does not have to take to the serious study of Greek, Latin and Aramaic to understand or appreciate the significance of these directly borrowed terms or phrases as they are so regularly encountered that their meanings often become apparent in their liturgical context which may even be bilingual in presentation such as the popular refrain 'Praise ye the Lord – Alleluia!'. A neologism like 'ecumenical' (unknown till the 20th century) though derived directly from the Greek (οἰκουμένη 'world') is quickly assimilated into the English language. Because it is first used in the context of church unity, the meaning could easily be explained and understood without resorting to etymology and the word is now extended to mean 'universal, worldwide'.

There are also a host of derived words with easily recognizable Greek roots which have come into the English language via their Latin forms through Christian liturgical or hierarchical usage e.g.:

Baptism (<Lat. *baptismus* or *baptismum*, <Gr. βάπτισμα or βαπτισμός)
Baptize (<Lat. *baptizo* <Gr. βαπτίζω)
Christ (<Lat. Christus <Gr. Χριστός 'the anointed one')
Diocese (<Lat. *diocesis, diocesanus* <Gr. διοίκησις 'administration, government')
Eucharist (<Lat. *eucharistia* <Gr. εὐχαριστία 'thanksgiving')
Epiphany (<Lat. *epiphania* <Gr. ἐπιφάνεια 'appearance, coming')
Episcopal (<Lat. *episcopalis* cf. Gr. ἐπίσκοπος 'overseer' - NB the English word 'bishop' is not derived from Greek or Latin)
Liturgy (<Lat. *liturgia* <Gr. λειτουργία 'public service')
Martyr (<Lat. *martyr*, gen. *martyris*, <Gr. μάρτυς, gen. μάρτυρος)
Pentecost (<Lat. *pentecoste* <Gr. πεντηκοστή 'fiftieth (day)')
Theology (<Lat. *theologia* <Gr. θεολογία 'teaching about God' – non-Biblical)

The use of Latin as the main ecclesiastical language in England throughout the Middle Ages has also introduced a large number of terms of distinctive Latin origin into everyday use which might not have otherwise entered the English language:

Catholic (<Lat. *catholicus* <Gr. καθολικός 'universal')
Confession (<Lat. *confessio*)
Divine (<Lat. *divinus*)
Penance, Penitent (<Lat. *paenitentia*)
Religion (<Lat. *religio* often translates Gr. θρησκεία 'religion, worship')
Saint (<Lat. *sanctus*)
Spirit (<Lat. *spiritus* 'breath', cf. *spiro* 'to breathe')
Trinity (<Lat. *trinitas*)

Although Aramaic was the reputed language of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the New Testament in Syriac is not free from Greek loanwords because the received text was in Greek and books like the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles would have almost certainly been composed entirely in Greek. A key theological concept like the 'Paraclete' (Gr. Παράκλητος = Syr. *prqlyṭ'*), a distinctive textual term like 'Evangelion' (Gospel) (Gr. εὐαγγέλιον = Syr. *'wnglywn*, cf. Sogd. *'wnglywn* and Chin. *Yinglun jing* 應輪經 'the *Yinglun* sūtra'), an emblematic liturgical term like 'Eucharist' (Gr. εὐχαριστία = Syr. *'wkrsṭy'*) and an essential hierarchy-term like 'Episcopos' (bishop) (Gr. ἐπίσκοπος = Syr. *'pysqwp'*) which all originated in Greek were transcribed and transliterated rather than translated into Syriac although Semitic equivalents of these terms like *kwrbn'*, 'offering, *hence* Eucharist' could be found and are used. The use of transcription and (re)vocalized transliteration is not a sign of sloth on behalf of the translator but is the expression of the desire to preserve the authenticity of the original to avoid ambiguity.

As many of the events in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles took place in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire where Greek was the *lingua franca*, a large number of Greek words, some of Latin origin, especially those pertaining to government, the imperial administration and the military are given in transliterated forms in the *Peshitta* and some of these would resurface in Middle Iranian (and even Chinese) Christian and Manichaean texts recovered from Central Asia:

Gr. Καῖσαρ 'Caesar' from Lat. = Syr. *qsr* (cf. Sogd. *qysr*, *kysr* (Chr. and Manich.), >Chin. (Nest.) *jixi* 奇悉)
Gr. ἀνθύπατος transl. Lat. *proconsul, -ulis* = Syr. *'ntwpṭws*
Gr. στραττώτης 'soldier' = Syr. *'sṭrṭywṭ'* (cf. Pth. *'strtywt'* (Manich.))
Gr. σπεκουλάτωρ (from Latin *speculator*) 'spy, *hence* executioner' = Syr. *'spwqlṭr'*

Not uninteresting is the loan from the Greek into Syriac of the word for 'brigand' (ληστής = Syr. *lsṭ'*, *lsṭy'*), hardly a shortage term in any language or society, but one supposes it is similar to English loan of the Sicilian term 'Mafia' for a similar purpose. Such borrowing of *technici termini* is particularly common to colonial rule and one only needs to look at the Syriac deed of sale from Dura Europos or the legal documents from the Middle Euphrates to see the large number of transliterated Greek and Latin titles, terms and linguistic calques which were taken for granted by the 3rd C. CE.[1]

When Syriac Christian texts were translated into Sogdian in Central Asia, a number of transliterated terms from Greek like *'pysqwp'*, *mytrpwlyt'* (metropo-

1 DRIJVERS-HEALEY 1999 (ed. & tr.), 231-48.

litan), *nwm* (law, <Gr. νόμος), *qtwlq'* (Catholicos) and *qnwn'* (<Gr. Κανών, a measuring rod, a rule of life, hence a *canon*, a list of those to be prayed for etc.) found their way into Sogdian. As Christian Sogdians used mainly a modified Syriac script, such borrowing is relatively simple. The (native) Sogdian script itself was derived originally from a cursive form of Aramaic and borrowing from Syriac, it could also accommodate transcriptions from Syriac. However, local equivalents were often used alongside loan words. One Syriac term, though, which is not as often encountered in transcription in Christian texts and inscriptions from Central Asia as one would expect is *krysṭyn'*, 'a Christian' (<Gr. χριστιανός Ac. 26:28) as Christians in Central Asia simply styled themselves as 'believers' using the loaned Syriac term *mhymn'*. But Christians in Sasanian Iran were also known by the Middle Iranian term of *trs'g* (*tarsāk*) 'fearer' (from *trs* 'fear'), i.e. a 'God-fearer'. As I have pointed out in two earlier studies,[2] the name *Jingjiao* 景教 in Chinese which is traditionally translated as the 'Luminous Religion' may be a homophone borrowing or calque for *tarsāk*. It is worth noting that at the end of the Sogdian version of the Nicene Creed, the Syriac *'dt' qdyšt' wšlyḥyt' qtwlqy* 'Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church' is translated as *pty'mbrymynč trsq'ny 'ncmn* lit. the 'prophetic and reverential community'.[3]

The Impact of Buddhism

The language of the Church of the East in China, and their modern successors, both Catholic and Protestant, however, did not enjoy such a privileged position in regards to the Chinese language. Terms of Christian origin like 'Christ-like', 'Messiah', 'Saviour' do have equivalents in Chinese but they have little impact on the spoken or written language of the majority as Christianity remains a minority religion. The same goes for the use of Buddhist terms in modern Chinese. Just like many Anglophone Christians have forgotten that 'Christ' is a Greek loanword, most Chinese would take the name of Buddha in Chinese, *fo* 佛, as of Chinese origin and will be surprised to learn that it is phonetically transliterated from Sanskrit *budh*.[4] Because it is originally a phonetic character which does not have the meaning of 'to be aware of', 'be awake' as does the Sanskrit *budh*. The equally important Chinese Buddhist term *pusa* 菩薩, as one can easily guess, is a phonetic transcription for the Sanskrit *Bodhisattva*.[5] While both are important religious terms, they are rarely used outside the context of Buddhist teaching or worship except for a term like *foxing* 佛性, 'a kind and placid nature' or an idiom like *fokuo shexin* 佛口蛇心, 'good words but a wicked heart'

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2 LIEU in SUNDERMANN-HINTZE-DE BLOIS 2009 (eds.), 227-245 and LIEU in TANG-Winkler 2013 (eds.), 123-140

3 *STi* 87.

4 *DCBT* 225a.

5 Ibid. 389a.

even though literary Chinese is a major language of Buddhism. The well-known Buddhist term *nirvana* (Skr. *Nīrvāṇa*), 'liberation, salvation' is much more often encountered in English as it is used commonly to indicate an harmonious or ecstatic state of existence than in Chinese in which it retains a strictly Buddhist meaning. Many Chinese-speakers might even have difficulty in pronouncing the relevant characters (*niepan* 涅槃) because they are rare characters and chosen solely for their phonetic value to denote a religious term of foreign origin with no indigenous meaning. In Chinese, rarely used characters are often employed for the task of transcription as they will alert the reader to their phonetic use to represent the pronunciation of foreign, and therefore, strange or 'rare' words. Unlike modern Chinese texts, underlining was not used in pre-modern times to indicate proper names. So a reader of a document of the Church of the East from Dunhuang had to be made aware of a proper name entirely through context and the occurrence of rare characters would alert the reader of the presence of a foreign name or term.

On the other hand, Buddhist demonology gained considerable popularity among the Chinese public in the Sui (581-618 CE) and Tang (618-907 CE) periods and transcribed terms like *mo* 魔 (from Sanskrit *mara*) quickly established itself as a general term for 'devil' or 'a devilish figure'. *Yanluo wang* 閻羅王 'King Yanluo' (*yanluo* from Sanskrit *yama*). *Mo* still is recognized in most Chinese folk religions as the god of the dead[6] and *yecha* 夜叉 (from Sanskrit *yakṣa* lit. 'a nocturnal fork', cf. Sogd. *yqšyy*) commonly describes someone looking a bit disheveled or ghost-like. All three terms are used by the vast majority of the Chinese without any inkling of their Buddhist or Indian origin. Two Buddhist terms, one translated and the other an equivalent, viz. *tiantang* 天堂 lit. 'hall in the sky' (i.e. mansion for the *devas*)[7] and *diyu* 地獄 lit. 'terrestrial *or* underground prison',[8] are regularly used in every day Chinese for places of reward and punishment in the afterlife and were adopted by Chinese-speaking Christians. These two Buddhist terms together with *Yanluo wang* as a 'Final Judgment King' and *yecha* as a term for 'evil demons' would also find their way into the extant texts of the Church of the East.[9]

Transcription versus Translation

Transcription of religious terms on phonetic principles therefore is an age-old phenomenon. When the first missionaries of the Church of East began to dis-

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6 Ibid. 451b-452a.

7 Ibid. 144a.

8 Ibid. 207b.

9 For *tiantang* and *diyu* as used in Chinese (Nestorian) Christian texts see *SZBSL* in SAEKI 1951, 70.1 and 70.4 respectively; for *Yanluo wang* see *XTMSSJ* in SAEKI 1951, 18.9 and for *yecha* see *SZBSL* in SAEKI 1951, 68.8.

seminate their religion within the Chinese-speaking milieu, they were confronted by issues regarding transcription and translation very similar if not identical to those encountered several centuries later by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries. As Chinese is not an alphabetic language, characters with appropriate sounds have to be employed to signify foreign names but sometimes these characters have specific meanings and some of you will no doubt be aware that there is a hilarious (to us anyway) phonetic transcription for the name 'Jesus' in a well-known Chinese text of the Church of the East. A new religion using a large number of terms in phonetic transcription in the translation of its liturgy and theological texts would inevitably underline its foreignness. On the other hand, Chinese converts or would be converts who were seeking allegiance to a new and foreign faith which could provide something missing in Chinese culture might view the strange sounding terms as proof of the religion's authenticity and efficacy. I learned from a conference on history of mission at Munich a few years ago that the early Moravian missionaries to Asia and Africa, especially the so-called Hermhuter Brüdergemeine in the 18th century, set up coastal compounds and evangelized in their native German (language) to ensure that their teaching was not diluted by the need to 'go native'. It was the converts who had to be 'in-culturated' or 'indigenized' rather than the Christian message itself.[10] The controversy over the retention of Latin rites by certain factions of the Catholic Church is part of the same debate. Some of the most ardent supporters in Hong Kong of the retention of the Latin, I was told, were illiterate or semi-literate fisher-folk who feared that the Mass in the vernacular would be less authentic and therefore inefficacious. A fine line, therefore, has to be drawn between transcription on the one hand and translation or the use of circumlocution on the other.

The topic of the use and avoidance of transcription in the context of acculturation by the Church of the East in China is an important aspect of social linguistics and is too large to be dealt with in one single discussion. I shall therefore limit my observations to a number of key names and titles which are regularly presented in transcription in the extant texts and inscriptions: God (the supreme deity), God the Father, Jesus the Messiah, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, Satan and the phrase 'Jews and Greeks'. As Manichaeism in Tang China also had its roots in Judaeo-Christianity as the founder Mani himself spoke a dialect of Aramaic akin if not identical to Syriac and as the first followers in Central Asia spoke Sogdian, the endeavours of the religion of Mani (Sogd. *mrmny δyn*, Chin. *Monijiao* 摩尼教) in representing the names of their deities and demons in Chinese provide valuable material for comparison. I have not included, however, any study of the transcription or transcription of Syriac personal names like Sergius, Gabriel *etc.* and titles of Christian scriptures into Chinese as this

10 See esp. METTELE 2012, 215-38, esp. 232-34.

particular area of research has been well covered in the works of other scholars.[11]

(i) *Alāhā - The Supreme Deity*

The Semitic, or more specifically Syriac, term for God *alāhā* (*'lḥ'* <Hebr. *'lōhīm*) is used in the Peshitta for the Greek word θεός. As Christian Sogdian texts were written in a slightly modified version of the Syriac script, one would expect to encounter *'lḥ'* regularly in Sogdian Christian literature. However, Sogdian-speaking Christians had a strong preference for the Old Iranian term *bγ-* (Manich. *βγ-*, pl. *βγyšt*), 'God, lord' and this is used instead of *alāhā* even in such doctrinally significant documents as the Sogdian version of the Nicene Creed:

THE SYRIAC VERSION (ed. Caspari, cf. *ST* i, 87):

1/ mhymnynn bḥd 'lh' 'b' 'ḥyd 2/ kl 'bwd' dklhyn 'ylyn dmtḥzyn 3/ wdl' mtḥzyn.	We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

THE SOGDIAN VERSION (ed. Müller, *ST* I, 84):

1/ wrnymsq pr yw βγw 'ptrw wyspy y 2/ d'r'y o sβryny s't 'yšty ky wyt βnt 3/ 't L['...] wyt βnt o	(We) believe in one God, the Father, who upholds everything, the Creator of all things that are seen and unseen.

Unlike the Arabic *aḷḷāh*, which is phonetically rendered in Chinese as *Ālā* 阿拉 *etc.* and accepted by all Chinese Muslims and non-Muslims as the name of the supreme and only deity in Islam, *alāhā*, though derived from the same Semitic root and transcribed as *aluohe* 阿羅訶 did not seem to command the same respect or popularity among Chinese Christians of the Tang Dynasty. It occurs less than half a dozen times in Chinese inscriptions and texts of the Church of the East from the Tang period although it is given venerated status in the Xi'an and Luoyang inscriptions[12] and in Trinitarian formulae such as the one which prefaced the Chinese version of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*[13] or the *Zunjing* 尊

[11] See esp. TAKAHASI in KIRAZ 2008, 631-662 and TAKAHASHI in TANG-WINKLER 2013, 13-24. See also HUNTER in WINKLER-TANG 2009, 71-85.

[12] Cf. *LXZGB* in SAEKI 1951, 1.5: 我三一妙身無元真主阿羅訶歟判 'He is three, yet a single wondrous being, the true lord who has no beginning, Āluóhē (i.e. God, <Syr. Alāhā) …', trans. Dr Lance Eccles for the Serica Project (un-published) and *JJILY*, l. 2, ed. and trans. By Li TANG, p. 2: 清淨阿羅訶 . 清淨大威力. 清淨[…] 'Holy Āluóhē, Holy Mighty (one), Holy [immortal] …'.

[13] *SWMDZ* l. 3, in SAEKI 1951, 71.3.

經 [*The Book of Veneration*][14] where *aluohe* is given the additional epithets of *huangfu* 皇父, 'royal father' and *cifu* 慈父, 'compassionate father' respectively. The name *aluohe* in Chinese is typical of transliterated foreign names in that the three characters used to represent the three syllables do not have any combined meaning and all three characters are regularly used in the transcription of foreign sounds. In the standard Protestant Chinese translation of the Bible, the name of the God of Israel is given as *yehehua* 耶和華 from the standard Anglicized from 'Jehova' and Elohim is rendered by the indigenous Chinese term for spirit *shen* 神 prefaced by a respectful gap of one character to indicate its elevated status. The fact that Elohim is not transliterated in the Chinese Bible has led Chinese scholars working on 'Nestorian' texts to equate *aluohe* 阿羅訶 with *yehehua* 耶和華 (i.e. Jehova).[15] This equation is unfortunate as the two divine names in Chinese are derived from different Semitic roots.

Judging from the two extant inscriptions and the corpus of nine texts from Dunhuang, the Church of the East, unlike Islam, did not persuade, educate or coerce the local converts to accept a supreme deity with a distinctively foreign sounding name. Instead a plethora of altematives was employed, using equivalents from the vocabulary of popular Daoism and of popular Buddhism, the terms which might have appeared less foreign to a Chinese audience. The term for 'spirit' in Daoism *shen* 神 was elevated by the Church of the East to *yishen* 一神 'the one spirit' i.e. 'one God'. English has an exact parallel in its use of the old Teutonic word 'God' (Germ. *Gott*) for the supreme Christian deity instead of adopting the Latin *deus* like in French which became 'dieu'. In Chinese the use of a readily recognizable form for a divine figure is particularly necessary in apologetic texts like the 'Discourse on Monotheism'. Its famous opening line: 萬物見一神 'All things (lit. 'a myriad of things') attest to One God'[16] would have been much harder for a non-Christian reader to comprehend if it was translated as 'All things (lit. 'ten thousand things') attest to *Aluohe*'. It is not impossible that the choice of the term *shen* 神 in Chinese Christian texts was suggested by the widespread use of the term *βγ-* 'god' in Sogdian Christian texts as the translation process then would have involved the translation of one generic term into another. Christians of all denominations in the modern Era of Mission in China adopted the word *shen* to mean the Christian God and helped to elevate the word from meaning 'spirit' to 'God' in daily usage. Thus the term for (Christian) 'theology' in modern Chinese is *shenxue* 神學 and few would be so obtuse as to ask which *shen* is meant.

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14 *ZJ* l. 2, *ed. cit.* p. 74.2. The term *cifu* is also used in Chinese Manichaean writings to denote the Father of Greatness. Cf. *DMT* III/4 11.

15 See e.g. LU Yuan 路遠 2009, 68.

16 *YSL* in SAEKI 1951, 30.1.

Another Chinese equivalent for *aluohe* is the borrowed Buddhist title *tianzun* 天尊 lit. 'the Venerable One of Heaven' which is also used in Daoism.[17] This term, which has considerable *gravitas* in Chinese, together with *yishen,* 'one God' which is unambiguously monotheistic, are probably the most often encountered terms for the supreme deity in Chinese Christian texts of the Church of the East. A term unique to one Christian text from Dunhuang, the *Da Qin Jingjiao xuanyuan zhi ben jing* 大秦景教宣元至本經 (*Sūtra of the Roman Luminous Religion Expounding the Origins and Reaching the Fundaments*) – a text which was also inscribed on the Luoyang stele – is *jiangdi* 匠帝 lit. 'creator ruler'.[18] It is a logical term to coin by Chinese-speaking Christians as the term *jiang* 匠, 'craftsman, carpenter, maker' was used in the Xi'an Monument as a verb to mean 'to create': 匠成萬物然立初人 - 'He created all things, then he established (i.e. created) the First Man, …'.[19] When one considers that the supreme deity is known as *tianzhu* 天主 lit. 'Master of Heaven' to modern day Chinese Catholics and *shangdi* 上帝 lit. 'Supreme Ruler' to Protestants, their 'Nestorian' precursors were not too far of the mark with 'the Venerated One of Heaven' and 'Creator Ruler'.

(ii) Jesus the Messiah

The name 'Jesus' and the Greek epithet 'Christ' (Χριστός) are transcriptions in almost all languages except in Aramaic and Syriac to which both *yšwʿ* and *mšyḥʾ* are native. In Greek, of course, χριστός has the meaning of 'be rubbed on, anointed' and was therefore not a loaned word but the combined title Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός would have certainly sounded strange to many non-Jews. The transliterated form of the word *mšyḥʾ* in Greek, i.e. Μεσσίας, is only found twice in the Greek New Testament and on both occasions its Greek equivalent χριστός is given in the form of an explanation but modern translations tend to give Christ as the equivalent rather than 'the anointed' as the intended meaning:

Joh. 1:41: εὑρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν, ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον χριστός. "'We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ)."
Joh. 4:25: οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός· "I know that the Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); …"

The New Testament in Syriac requires no such explanation as the term *mšyḥʾ* is always used instead of χριστός. Why is an imported word used when the original is available in what is reputed to be Christ's own language? 'Christ' only features in Peshitta in the term *krystynʾ* transliterating the Greek χριστιανός (1Pet. 4:16 var. *krsṭynʾ* in Ac. 26:28). In Central Asia, the dominant form of the name Jesus Christ is therefore the Aramaic *yšw ʿmšyḥʾ*. This name-plus-epithet

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17 *DCBT* 145a.
18 *XYZBJ* in SAEKI 1951, 96.9.
19 *LXZGB* l. 4, trans. ECCLES (unpublished).

appears twice in phonetic transcription in the extant corpus of Chinese Christian texts of the Church of the East from Dunhuang. The first is *yishu mishihe* 移鼠迷師訶.[20] The characters *mishihe* 迷師訶 has no meaning in Chinese but *yishu* 移鼠, as many of you are aware, literally means a 'migrant rat' or 'a rodent on the run'. One assumes that as the five characters are clearly phonetic transcription of a foreign name and title, the meaning of the words did not matter, especially if the sermon in which the curious transcription is found was meant to be delivered by a Christian preacher, i.e. a version for 'insiders only'. However, as it is normal practice in pre-modern Chinese to use rare (and often difficult to pronounce) characters for transcription as we shall see in our second example or to place an extra 'mouth' (*kou* 口) radical to the left side of a more commonly used character to indicate that the new character should be read for phonetic purpose only. *Yishu* 移鼠 might have provided an accurate phonetic transcription but was the choice of the characters a scribal prank I wonder? There were highly respectful Buddhist stories in which a mouse (or mice) played a positive and even redeeming role. The transcribed name might not therefore have seemed as comical to a Tang Chinese audience as it is to a modern reader.

The second example, *shizun yishu mishihe* 世尊翳數弥師訶, comes from a different text and has an additional title *shizun* 世尊 which literally means 'Lord of the World' and which I shall discuss later.[21] The transcribed form *mishihe* differs from the previous example in one character, i.e. *mi* 弥 for *mi* 迷. The use of *mi* 弥 follows more closely the rule of using rarer characters for transcription which I have already mentioned and is already used in transcription of Buddhist terms such as 弥勒佛 *milefo,* 'Maitreya Buddha'. It also prevents a perfidious reader from taking *mishi* 迷師 to mean 'a teacher who has lost his way'. As for *yšw'* there is little danger of taking the two characters used in this instance to be anything but the phonetic transcription of a foreign name. *Yi* 翳 is a very rare character and has two radical-parts providing two meanings. The first has to do with medicine and the first meaning therefore is a form of eye aihnent and the second radical has to do with feathers or birds and provides the character with a second meaning of a 'screen made of feathers'. *Shu* 數 on the other hand is a commonly used word meaning 'to count' or 'calculate' or 'a number' – 'mathematics' in Chinese is *shuxue* 數學. Its regular use in phonetic transcription is an indication of the paucity of Chinese characters with the requisite sound for transliterating foreign names which abound in the 'sh(o)' sound. It is interesting to note that in Chinese Manichaean texts in which Jesus is also an important deity, his name is uniformly transliterated as *yishu* 夷數[22] with the same second

20 *XTMSSJ* in SAEKI 1951, 25.4.
21 *SZBSL* in SAEKI 1951, 66.7/8
22 *DMT* III/4, 108.

Chinese character as his name in the Christian texts. The first character *yi* 夷 means 'foreign' or 'barbarian' which is not unsuitable for a transliterated proper name. As Wang Ding has rightly pointed out in his paper published in the proceedings of the first Salzburg Conference, at this stage of Christian mission 'an organization in translating praxis is still lacking. A unitary administration in this matter should be run either by the Church, or, in the case of ancient China's tradition of issuing uniform Buddhist translations, by the central government.'[23]

Given the centrality of Jesus Christ to Christianity, one would expect the name Jesus to appear frequently in transcription in Chinese Christian texts as well as the epithet 'Messiah'. However, this is far from the case, as the name Jesus (*yšwʿ*) is found less than half a dozen times in the texts. 'Jesus the Messiah' is represented primarily by three forms of the transcription for *mšyḥʾ*, viz. 弥師訶, 彌師訶 and 迷施訶 – all three pronounced *mishihe* which is much more phonetically accurate than *misaiya* 彌賽亞 in the modern Chinese Protestant Bible which is clearly influenced by the modern forms of Messiah. The status of Jesus as the 'Son of God' readily lent him the title of 'Holy Son' (*shengzi* 聖子 lit. 'son of a sage') – a title which he still holds in modern Chinese Christianity. Since God the Father in Chinese texts of the Church of the East has the title of *tianzun* 天尊 'Lord of the Heavens', the Son came to be known also as *shizun* 世尊 lit. 'Lord of the Earth'. The use of both terms give a Buddhistic feel to the documents and it has even been suggested that Jesus was intentionally depicted as Buddha-figure in these texts. The difficulty in preserving a vestige or semblance of the Graeco-Aramaean root of 'Christ-Messiah' was a major issue faced by modern day translators. The standard term for Christianity in modern Chinese is *jidujiao* 基督教 lit. 'teaching (*or* religion) of Christ'. If a Chinese person-in-the-street were to be asked what do the characters really mean, s/he would probably say 'the teaching (*jiao* 教) of the supervisor (*du* 督) of the foundation (*ji* 基)' – shades of the Greek term *archegos*. However, this is one example of how by using characters with combined meanings one could inadvertently cause a transliterated term to take on a new guise. The characters *ji* and *du* were not chosen because they appeared to have reverential meanings but because they phonetically transcribe the *ch(i)* (χ) and *to* (τ) in *Christos* (Χριστός). None of the Chinese transcriptions for Messiah or Christ, ancient or modern, has attempted to contain any reference to 'oil' or 'anointing'. This fundamental aspect of the sacred name has long been seen as secondary and the explication of the name 'Messiah' is now a task for the commentary or the exegete and not of the translator.

[23] WANG in MALEK 2006, 153.

(iii) *The Holy Spirit*

By its very nature, the third member of the Trinity has a defined role which lends itself to translation more than transcription in almost all languages as it is not strictly speaking a proper name. The Syriac form of the name *rwḥ' d-qwdš'* 'holy breath *or* wind' is found in phonetically transliterated form in two Chinese Christian texts of the Church of the East from Dunhuang: *luheningjusha* 盧訶寧俱沙[24] and more simply as *luoji* 囉嵇.[25] On the first transliterated form, Hidemi Takahashi has well remarked: "Anyone with the least knowledge of Syriac will immediately recognize that this must be a transcription of "Rūḥā d-Qudšā" but will be puzzled at the same time by the representation of Syriac 'd-' by "niajŋ" (PY níng, K nieng)."[26] The use of the character 寧, pronounced *ning* in modern Chinese but probably *ni* in Tang period, to phonetically represent *di* in the transcription of foreign names and titles in the Tang period is not unattested. A well known example is *ningwan* 寧萬 used by the Chinese Manichaeans to transliterate the Parthian term *dyb'n* (*dibān*), 'letters'.[27] The two transliterated forms are also the only examples of the Syriac form of the 'Holy Spirit' or 'Spirit' appearing in Chinese Christian texts from Dunhuang. The translated or equivalent forms *liangfeng* 涼風 'cool breeze'[28] and *jingfeng* 淨風 'pure *or* divine wind'[29] are, by contrast, widely attested in the Christian documents from Dunhuang. The term *jingfeng* 淨風 was also used by Chinese Manichaeans for translating the name of the deity known as the Living Spirit[30] (Pa. *w'd jywndg*,[31] Sogd. *w'δjywndy*[32]). Sadly the 'wind' or 'breath' aspect of the ancient translation appears to need reminding for modern day Chinese Christians as the standard modern Chinese name for the third member of the Trinity, *shengling* 聖靈 lit. 'Holy Ghost', echoes modern European forms of the name.

(iv) *Mary the Mother of Jesus*

According to Ibn al-Nadim, the mother of the 'prophet' Mani was known by a number of names and among them is 'Mar Maryam'.[33] It came therefore as no surprise to Manichaean scholars that in a Chinese summary of Mani's life and teaching in Chinese found at Dunhuang known as the *Compendium*, we find that his mother was called, *inter alia*, *manyan* 滿艷 which literally means 'full

24 *ZJ*, ed. SAEKI 1951, 74.3.
25 *ZXALJ* in SAEKI 1951, 81.3.
26 Cf. TAKAHASHI in KIRAZ 2008, 637.
27 Cf. TAKAHASHI in KIRAZ 2008, 637 and note 20. See also *DMT* III/4 107 (*s.v.* Ningwan).
28 *XTMSSJ* in SAEKI 1951, 24.7.
29 *SWMDZ* in SAEKI 1951, 71.6. The term *qingjing* 清淨 'pure' is often used to mean 'divine' in the Judaeo-Christian sense and Islam is sometimes referred to as *qingjingjiao* 清淨教 'the pure i.e. holy teaching'.
30 *DMT* III/4 34.
31 *DMT* III/1 334.
32 *DMT* III/2 197.
33 See Ibn al-Nadim's *Kitab al-Fihrist* in FLÜGEL 1862 (ed.), 49.4, REEVES 2011, 36.

of beauty'.[34] A very similar transcription for the name of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is found in a Chinese Christian text also from Dunhuang, *moyan* 末艷 which could be understood to mean 'the end of beauty'.[35] The Manichaean translators had clearly won the 'beauty' contest but not just by lateral thinking but also through the accident of phonology. Both sets of translators had split the name *maryam* into *mar-yam* because of the known difficult the Chinese had and still have with pronouncing *r-* followed by a vowel and transliterated it accordingly by two characters. The standard transcription of the name Mary / Maria in modern Chinese by contrast is either in three characters (*v. infra*) or in two characters like *mali* 馬麗 (lit. 'horse-beauty) or *mali* 馬莉 (lit. 'horse-jasmine') with the second of the two characters containing the *–r-* (in Chinese *–l-*) sound to prevent the name from being wrongly split when pronounced. The character *mo* 末 *moyan* 末艷 in means, *inter alia*, 'the end' but is so widely used in transcription, especially for the Semitic (esp. Syriac) title *mar* 'lord, master' that its use in transliterating the first part of the name *maryam* is entirely understandable, especially by a Syriac-speaking Christian. As for *manyan* 滿, as James Hamilton has reminded us, 'the final *–n* in this period, must have sounded very much like the final *-r* of other languages, for it was then used regularly in Chinese to transcribe a foreign *–r*.'[36] The reverse is probably also true. For instance the Chinese name for the Parthian Kingdom Anxi 安息 (EMC: ʔan-sik) is derived from Aršak with the medial *–r-* substituted by *–n-*. A Manichaean scribe who knew Parthian might have pronounced *maryam* as *man-yam*, hence *manyan* 滿艷 (EMC: *muan-yam*) 'full of beauty'. What is interesting is that in both cases the translators, Christian and Manichaean, had based their transcriptions on the written rather than the oral forms of the name from Central Asia.

Mary's status as a virgin in the New Testament makes it easy for her to be presented to the reader by a functional equivalent. Hence she is referred to as a *shinü* 室女 'handmaid' (shades of Lk. 1:38 δουλή) in the *Xi'an Monument*[37] and as a 'virgin' *tongnü* 童女 lit. 'girl-child' in a Dunhuang document.[38] The latter is also used by the Chinese Manichaeans for translating the name of an important set of female deities known as the Light Virgins.[39] For Christological reasons, no doubt, there is no hint of Maryam being Theotokos in our Chinese Christian texts of the Church of the East. Maliya 馬利亞, the standard version of the name of the Mother of Jesus in modern Chinese is clearly a transcription of the popular European form of her name derived from the Latin 'Maria'.

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34 *DMT* III/4 104.
35 *XTMSSJ* in SAEKI 1951, 24.6.
36 HAMILTON 1995, 27.
37 *Xi'anMon.* l. 6, in SAEKI 1951, 2.4.
38 *XTMSJ* in SAEKI 1951, 24.6.
39 *DMT* III/4 68.

(v) *Satan the Demon King*

The name Satan is easy to transcribe into most languages and Chinese is no exception. What is surprising though is that Suodan 娑殫 features prominently albeit negatively in the Xi'an Monument giving the impression that the Christians possessed a dualistic cosmology despite their ardent confession of monotheism:[40]

匠成萬物然立初人。別賜良和令鎮化海。渾元之性虛而不盈。素蕩之心本無希嗜。洎乎娑殫施妄。鈿飾純精。閒平大於｜此是之中。隙冥同於彼非之內。

He (i.e. *alaha*) created all things, he then established (i.e. created) the First Man, making everything harmonious for him and giving him charge over land and sea. His original nature was one of contentment, his simple heart had no lustful desires; but then Suodan (i.e. Satan) deceived him into a vain adornment of his pure essence. On the surface this seemed reasonable [5] and correct, but hidden within was darkness and error.

Another transcribed form of his name, Suoduona 娑多那, is found in the 'Discourse on Monotheism' from Dunhuang in which it was also said that his previous name was *emogui* 惡魔鬼 'evil demon'.[41] While the first form of the name Satan, i.e. Suodan, was likely to have been phonetically transliterated from Sogdian (*s't'n*), the latter, i.e. Suoduona, might have been derived from Syriac (*sṭn'*) – the two most important languages of the Church of the East in Central Asia. As we have already noted, the Chinese character *mo* 魔 was originally coined to partially transliterate the Buddhist Sanskrit term *mara* 'demon' but by the Tang period *mo* had been thoroughly indigenized and few would have thought of it as a foreign import. It was readily employed as a functional translation of the name Satan in Chinese Christian texts from Dunhuang. Sogdian-speaking Christians, however, had also shown great preference in their writings for Shimnu (*šmnw*) – a name with a complex etymological origin – as the local equivalent of Satan.[42] Why this popular form of the name of the arch-adversary of Christ in Central Asia is not found in transcription in Chinese Christian texts from Dunhuang remains a mystery.

(vi) *'Neither Jew nor Greek'*

In his letter to the Christians in Galatia (3:28), the Apostle Paul made the famous universalist claim that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek' (οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαιος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην …). Thanks to the chance survival of a bilingual lectionary text from Bulayïq in Syriac and Sogdian, which, according to Professor

40 *Xi'anMon.* ll. 4-5, in SAEKI 1951, 1.7-10, trans. ECCLES (unpublished).

41 *YSL*, in SAEKI 1951, 48.6.

42 See important comment on *šmnw* in SIMS-WILLIAMS 1992, 40.

Sims-Williams, was part of the Epistle lectionary for Christmas,[43] we are able to trace the transmission of this statement into Central Asia.[44] I have chosen this to show that where simple transcription is expected because the brief Pauline statement contains two proper names, Jews and Greeks (Hellenes), transcription alone could not be employed for the second of the two because there is more at stake than a proper name in the case of being called 'a Greek'. The standard word for a Greek in Syriac is *ywny* (<Gr. Ἴων, pl. Ἴωνες 'Ionians', cf. OPers. *Yauna*) but it does not readily signify a gentile. So in the Peshitta the phrase is rendered 'there is neither Jew or Aramean' (*lyt yhwdy' wl' 'rmy'*). The term Aramean here is normally vocalized differently from the same word for a speaker of the Aramaic language but both, according to Payne Smith, 'were the same Gentilic name, but sometime after the epoch of the Seleucidae the name *Syria*, a shortened form of Assyria, came into use instead of Aramea, and Syrian for Aramean. The ancient name was now restricted to the *Arameans of the East*, and when they did not receive Christianity the same became a synonym for *pagan* or *Sabian*, …'.[45] For the Sogdian translator in Central Asia of this theologically significant statement, a simple borrowing of the term 'Aramean' into Sogdian will not have the desired effect. So he translated it as 'there is neither Jew nor heathen' (*nyst cxwd 't ny rmq'ny*). The Sogdian *rmq'ny* is derived from *rm-* 'people' and a vulgar and politically incorrect translation of the term *rmq'ny* will be something like 'plebs'. What I find amazing is that the Sogdian translator of the verse had clearly noted the theological underwriting of the term 'Aramean' and took the precaution not to 'loan' through transcription or 'translate' (in the original sense of the word of 'lift across') it into Sogdian. Note also that in both Syriac and Sogdian translations, the 'Jews' remained constant and that the Chinese Christian name for the Jew *shihu(ren)* 石忽(人) found in the Dunhuang texts[46] is clearly derived from the Sogdian *cxwδ, cxwd* (cf. MPe. *yhwd*) and not from the Syriac *yhwd*. There was no problem over the identity or function of 'Jews' for readers of the New Testament in Central Asia as Jewish merchants also played an important trading role along the Silk Road.

Although there is no extant ancient Chinese version of the same statement, the translation in modern Chinese (Protestant) Bible of Galatians 3:28 gives an interesting glimpse at the same problem: 'nor is there distinction between Jews and Hellenes' (*bing bu fen youda ren xilini ren* 並不分猶大人希利尼人). The standard Chinese phonetic translation for a Greek (person) is *xilaren* 希臘人 which is derived phonetically and correctly from Hellas and not from the Latin Graecia as in most modern European languages. The same problem of transcription versus translation we have encountered in Central Asia in the Tang period

43 SIMS-WILLIAMS 2012, 44.
44 E6/3 n201 (Syriac and Sogdian bilingual) in SUNDERMANN 1981, 174.
45 PAYNE-SMITH 1903, 29.
46 *SZBSL*, ed. Saeki (1951) 55.6.

clearly faces the modern Chinese translator(s). He/they opted to phonetically transliterate the term 'Hellene' to signify a Greek-speaking non-Jew and not just any ethnic Greek person. But as *xilini ren* 希利尼人 occurs virtually only in the context of the Chinese New Testament and is not found even in the study of Hellenistic History in Chinese, both its historical and theological significance again will have to be explained by the commentator or the preacher-exegete.

Conclusion: Confrontation or Synthesis

When a missionary religion like Christianity encounters a new culture, it could either confront or synthesize. If a missionary religion fails to connect with the dominant linguistic or cultural environment it risks being consigned to irrelevance. The texts in Chinese of the Church of the East, both copied on scrolls and inscribed on stele, show enormous constraint in their use of phonetic terms in transcription and in the use of Buddhist terminology. Faced with a strongly developed Chinese culture, the Church of the East chose dialogue instead of confrontation or synthesis in overcoming the cultural and linguistic barrier separating multicultural Central Asia west of Turfan and a Sino-centric culture east of Dunhuang. Her literary heritage in Chinese shows so many parallels to modern efforts in translation (and transcription) that it certainly deserves continuous scholarly interest even if it could not be acknowledged as a successful role model. What Christianity, ancient and modern, had to do as part of the process of dialogue was to 'religionize' or more specifically 'Christianize' the Chinese language – a process which is happening now thanks to the steady import of Western terms and concepts into the Chinese language but for the Church of the East in medieval China it was the opposite of the popular adage 'too little, too late'. It was rather a sad case of attempting to do 'too much, too early'.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APAW = Abhandlungen der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, 1815-1907; philosoph.-hist. Kl., 1908-49)

DCBT = E. Soothill and L. Hodous (eds.), *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London, 1934).

DMT III/1 = D. Durkin-Meisterernst (ed.), *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts. Volume III,1: Texts from Central Asia and China (Texts in Middle Persian and Parthian)*. Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, Series Subsidia, 3 (Turnhout, 2004).

DMT III/2 = N. Sims-Williams, and D. Durkin-Meisterernst (eds.), *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts. Volume III,2: Dictionary of Manichaean Sogdian and Bactrian*, Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, Series Subsidia, 3 (Brepols, 2012).

DMT III/4 = G. B. Mikkelsen, (ed.), *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts. Volume III,4: Texts from Central Asia and China (Texts in Chinese),* Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, Series Subsidia, 4 (Brepols, 2006).

JJILY = *Jingjiao Inscription of Luoyang*, ed. and trans. Tang Li, 'A Preliminary Study on the Jingjiao Inscription of Luoyang: Text, Analysis, Commentary and English Translation' in D.W. Winkler and Tang Li (eds.) *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters.* Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia = Orientalia–Patristica–Oecumenica 1 (Vienna 2009) 109-32.

STi = F.W.K. Müller, *Soghdische Texte. I*, APAW 1912, Nr. 2 (Berlin).

SWMDZ = *Jingjiao Sanwei mengdu zan* 景教三威蒙度讚 (i.e. *A 'Motwa' Hymn of the Luminous Religion in adoration of the Three Powers,* i.e. the Trinity; *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*), ed. Saeki (1951): 71-73 (Chinese text section) and trans. idem, 266-72.

SZBSL = *Shizun bushi lun di san* 世尊布施論第三 (Discourse of the Lord of the Universe on Almsgiving), ed. Saeki (1951): (Chinese text section) 51-70 and idem, trans. 314A-314C.

Xi'an Mon. = *Da Qin Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei* 大秦景教流行中國碑 'Stele on the diffusion of the 'Luminous' Religion of Da Qin (i.e. the Church of the East) in the Middle Kingdom (i.e. China)', ed. Saeki (1951): (Chinese text section) 1-12 and idem, trans. 314A-314C.

XTMSSJ = *Xuting Mishisuo jing* 序聽迷詩所經 (i.e. *The Jesus-Messiah Sūtra*), ed. Saeki (1951): 13-29 (Chinese text section) and trans. idem 125-60

XYZBJ = *Da Qin Jingjiao xuanyuan zhi ben jing* 大秦景教宣元本經 (*Sūtra of the Roman Luminous Religion expounding the origins and reaching the fundaments*), ed. Saeki (1951): 96-99, trans. idem, 312-313D.

YSL = *Yishen lun* 一神論 (*Discourse on the One God*), ed. Saeki (1951): 30-70 (Chinese text section) and idem, trans. 161-247

ZJ = *Zunjing* 尊經 (*The Book of Veneration* or *Venerables and Books*), ed. Saeki, 1951: 74-76 (Chinese text section) and idem, trans. 273-80.

ZXALJ = *Zhixuan anle jing* 至玄安樂經 *(Scripture on Mysterious Peace and Happiness*), ed. Saeki (1951): 77-95 (Chinese text section) and idem, trans. 281-311.

ÜBER DIE ENKULTURATION DER PERSISCH-SYRISCHEN CHRISTEN IM TANGZEITLICHEN CHINA AM BEISPIEL DER ABGEWANDELTEN FORM DER „ZEHN GEBOTE“ IM „BUCH ÜBER JESUS DEN MESSIAS“

Zhu LI
University of Konstanz, Germany

1. Einleitung

Als die ersten Christen aus Zentralasien im 7. Jahrhundert im chinesischen Reich unter der Tang-Herrschaft ankamen, sahen sie sich mit einer hochentwickelten, multikulturellen und multiethnischen Kultur konfrontiert, in der die Einflüsse der konfuzianischen, buddhistischen und daoistischen Lehre dominierten. Um in dieser neuen Umgebung Fuß zu fassen, haben die Christen sich z. T. bewusst an die einheimische chinesische Kultur anpassen und einige ihrer Komponenten annehmen müssen. Solche bewussten Annäherungsversuche kann man als Fälle von Enkulturation bezeichnen: Sie stellen Bemühungen dar, die eigene christliche Lehre – bekannt als *Jingjiao* 景教 – durch Auseinandersetzung mit der einheimischen Kultur zu einem integrierten Teil dieser zu machen.[1] Die zeitgenössische Überlieferung gestattet Einblicke in diesen Annäherungsprozess und lässt u. a. folgende Fragen erörtern: Auf wen zielte die christliche „Mission“ überhaupt?[2] In welchen weiteren Gruppen suchten die Christen Anhänger, unter den gebildeten, einflussreichen Han-Chinesen, in der ländlichen Bevölkerung, oder vorwiegend unter den ethnischen Minderheiten? Wel-

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[1] Über die Definition der „enculturation“ oder „inculturation“ siehe: CHU 褚潇白 2011, 261f. Für einen Überblick über das Problem der Kontextualisierung und Indigeniesierung hinsichtlich der gesamten Missionsgeschichte in China, siehe: LIN in LIN 1990, 103-136. Es gibt in der Forschung die Diskussion darüber, ob die „Enkulturation“ eher unbewusste Anpassungsprozesse darstellt, während die „Akkulturation“ bewusstes und gezieltes Hineinwachsen in die kulturelle Umgebung bedeutet. Auf diese Diskussion werde ich in der vorliegenden Arbeit aber nicht eingehen, sondern ich stütze mich auf die Definition von Xiaobai Chu, die die beiden Fälle umfasst.

[2] Hier und im Folgenden setze ich bewusst das Wort „Mission“ in Anführungszeichen, um den Unterschied zwischen der mittelalterlichen Lebenssituation der Christen in China, die von der passiven geduldeten Koexistenz mit anderen religiösen Gruppen geprägt war, und der frühneuzeitlichen aktiven Missionierung durch Predigen und pastorale Tätigkeiten der katholischen Missionare zu verdeutlichen.

che Änderungen in der Dogmatik und Praxis der Lehre wurden vorgenommen, um sie den Chinesen verständlicher und akzeptabler zu machen?[3]

Die Tatsache, dass die Christen Schriften in chinesischer Sprache verfassten, deutet darauf hin, dass sie, auch wenn ihre konkreten Missionstätigkeiten mangels konkreter Berichte nicht nachzuzeichnen sind, zumindest die Absicht hatten, den einheimischen Chinesen oder aber den in China geborenen und „sinisierten“ Nachfahren derjenigen, die aus Persien, Syrien und anderen Ländern gekommen waren, die christliche Lehre vorzustellen.

Die Geschichte der im mittelalterlichen chinesischen Reich lebenden Christen, die ursprünglich aus Zentralasien stammten, lässt sich in zwei Phasen teilen: die Gründungsphase bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts mit einem ersten Aufschwung, und die Erneuerungsphase bis zur Huichang-Periode 會昌 (841-846), als alle fremden Religionen unter Druck gesetzt und ihre Mitglieder sogar vertrieben wurden.[4] In der bisherigen Forschung wurden häufig die im späten 8. Jahrhundert entstandenen sogenannten Jingjing-Dokumente 景淨[5] als Beleg für eine übermäßige Enkulturation angeführt, indem sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative Analysen der aufgenommenen buddhistischen und daoistischen Elemente im christlichen Schrifttum vorgenommen wurden.[6] Auf der Grundlage entsprechender Untersuchungen wurde und wird immer wieder die These vertreten, dass die persisch-syrischen Christen sich bewusst und gezielt an die einheimische chinesische Kultur assimiliert und dadurch die wesentlichen Merkmale der christlichen Lehre vernachlässigt hätten, was entscheidend zum end-

3 Ähnliche Überlegungen hinsichtlich der Einführung des Buddhismus in China findet man bei Helwig SCHMIDT-GLINTZER, Ausdehnung der Welt und innerer Zerfall (3. bis 8. Jahrhundert). In: Wolfgang BAUER (Hrsg.) 1980, *China und die Fremden. 3000 Jahre Auseinandersetzung in Krieg und Frieden*, S. 77-113. Hier S. 84f.

4 Eine Zäsur in der offiziellen Religionspolitik und der gesellschaftlichen Mentalität im Hinblick auf Fremde und Fremdartige setzte der An-Shi-Aufruhr 安史之亂 (755-763). Da die beiden Anführer dieses Aufruhrs Angehörige der Nicht-Han-Völker gewesen waren, herrschte nach der achtjährigen Kriegsperiode in der gesamten Gesellschaft Feindseligkeit gegenüber Menschen aus anderen Ländern und Ethnien vor.

5 Das sind die im späten 8. Jahrhudert entstandenen „Sanwei mengdu zan (inkl. Zunjing) 三威蒙度贊 [Gloria in excelsis deo]“, „Zhixuan anle jing 志玄安樂經 [Buch über die mysteriöse Freude und mysteriösen Frieden]“, „Xuanyuan zhiben jing 宣元至本經 [Buch über den Ursprung aller Ursprünge]“ und die Xi'an-Stele (781). Trotz der Unklarheit über ihre konkrete Autorschaft werden diese Schriften dem bekannten christlichen Mönch Jingjing (Adam) zugeschrieben, der den Bericht auf der Xi'an-Stele diktierte.

6 Für eine Auflistung der buddhistischen Ausdrücke in den Jingjiao-Dokumenten, die alle schriftlich-textuellen Überlieferungen der Christen in China umfassen, siehe: Zhenning LIU 2007 in 《贵州大学学报（社会科学版）》 [*Journal of Guizhou University (Social Science)*], (Jan. 2007), 51-59, hier S. 57. Für eine vollständige Aufzählung der buddhistischen und daoistischen Wörter in den Jingjiao-Dokumenten siehe: YANG 1995b, 43-73, hier S. 53-54.

gültigen Scheitern ihrer „Mission“ beigetragen habe.[7] Diese These bedarf meines Erachtens der Überprüfung und einer kritischen differenzierten Untersuchung, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die in der Gründungsphase verfassten Alopen-Schriften, die in der vorliegenden Arbeit anhand der im 7. Jahrhundert von der ersten Generation der Christen erstmals ins Chinesische übersetzten Version der Zehn Gebote näher erläutert werden soll.

Die Übersetzung der Zehn Gebote mit der Erklärung ihrer Bedeutung stellt einen wichtigen Teil des „Buch[es] über Jesus den Messias 序聽迷詩所經“ dar, das zu den sogenannten Alopen-Dokumenten 阿羅本 und daher zur historisch nachweisbaren Gründungsphase der syrischen „Mission“ in China gehört.[8] Im Bericht auf der Xi'an-Stele (781)[9] liest man, dass sich Alopen, möglicherweise ein Bischof, nach seiner Ankunft in Chang'an im kaiserlichen Palast aufgehalten habe, wo er „Klassiker (seiner Religion) (ins Chinesische) übersetze und Fragen (des Kaisers) über die Lehre (seiner Religion) beantworte“.[10] Alopen verfasste also, vermutlich mit Hilfe anderer, mehrere Schriften, um dem Kaiser und den Hofbeamten die christliche Lehre vorzustelle. Die zwei überlieferten Alopen-Dokumente, das „Buch über Jesus den Messias “ und das „Traktat über den einzigen Gott 一神論“, unterscheiden sich von den später entstandenen Jingjing-Dokumenten im Wesentlichen dadurch, dass sie keine theologischen Abhandlungen sind, sondern eine Zusammenstellung von Auszügen aus dem Alten und Neuen Testament darstellen. Das inhaltliche Spektrum erstreckt sich von der Schöpfungsgeschichte bis zur Passion Christi. Gerade anhand einer Analyse dieser frühen Bibelübersetzung kann man feststellen, – in Erweiterung der bisherigen Forschungsansichten – dass die erste Generation der syrisch-persischen Christen einerseits an den Kernpunkten der jüdisch-christlichen Lehre festhielt, andererseits sich aber auch bewusst der chinesisch-konfuzianischen (nicht der buddhistischen wie später in den Jingjing-Dokumenten) Ethik und

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7 YANG 1995b, cf. LO 罗香林 1966, 1-24.

8 Es gibt aber immer noch zweifelnde Stimmen in Bezug auf die Echtheit der zwei sog. Alopen-Dokumente, vor allem hinsichtlich ihrer Entstehungszeit und Überlieferungsgeschichte. Siehe dazu Lin Wushu, Über die Echtheit des Tomioka-Dokuments „Traktat(s) über den einzigen Gott“. Über die Echtheit des Takakusu-Dokuments „Buch über Jesus den Messias“. Ergänzende Studien über das Tomioka- und das Takakusu-Dokument. Alle drei Aufsätze in DERS 2011, 324-380; LIN Wushu 2011c.

9 Der vollständige Titel des Berichts auf der Stele ist „Lobgesang für die Stele über die Verbreitung des Jingjiao im Reich der Mitte. Zusammen mit einer Einleitung“. Der Text wurde im Jahr 781 von Jingjing (Adam) zu Gedenken an die Wohltaten eines Christens namens Yisi (Yazedbouzid) verfasst. Über die Entdeckungs- und Forschungsgeschichte dieser Stele siehe u. a. Paul Pelliot, L'inscription nestorienne de Si-Ngan-Fou. Edited with Supplements by Antonino FORTE 1996.

10 “翻經書殿, 問道禁闈”. Eigene Übersetzung. Wörter in Klammern sind sinngemäße Ergänzungen der Autorin. Über die Übersetzungsarbeit Alopens gibt es neben dem Bericht auf der Xi'an-Stele auch einen Hinweis in den Notizen des Zunjing 尊經, „Book of Worship“.

Moral annäherte, was sich deutlich in der veränderten Version der Zehn Gebote widerspiegelt.

Im Folgenden werde ich zunächst einen Überblick über die Zehn Gebote im „Buch über Jesus den Messias" mit eigener Übersetzung geben. Als Vergleichsparameter dient dabei die moderne chinesische Einheitsübersetzung der Bibel, die inhaltlich der Luther-Übersetzung entspricht, weshalb Bibeltexte aus der Lutherbibel zitiert werden. Anschließend möchte ich die ersten drei Gebote aus dem „Buch über Jesus den Messias" genauer betrachten und analysieren, zunächst auf der dogmatischen Ebene und dann auf der praktischen Ebene. Zum Schluss werden die christliche und die chinesische Tradition anhand der vorherigen Untersuchung in Verbindung gesetzt und im Hinblick auf die Frage der Enkulturation zusammen betrachtet.

2. Die „Zehn Gebote" im „Buch über Jesus den Messias": christliche Lehre mit chinesischen Elementen

In diesem Abschnitt werden die zwei Versionen der Zehn Gebote, die im „Buch über Jesus den Messias" aus dem 7. Jahrhundert und die der modernen Übersetzung, in Vergleich miteinander gestellt, um durch diese ersten Beobachtungen inhaltliche sowie formale Änderungen herauszuarbeiten.

序聽迷詩所經[11]	Buch über Jesus den Messias[12]	Exodus 20:2-17[13]
一切眾生皆各怕天尊。[…]一種先事天尊。	Man soll den himmlischen Herrn fürchten. Zunächst [soll man] den himmlischen Herrn dienen	Ich bin der HERR, dein Gott, […] Du sollst keine anderen Götter haben neben mir.

[11] Transkription und Interpunktion von Zhu LI auf der Grundlage der Fotokopie der originalen Handschrift. Im Jahr 2009 wurde die Handschrift in Dunhuang Miji 敦煌秘笈 [Die Geheimbücher aus Dunhuang] veröffentlicht: *Dunhuang Miji*, Band 6, Nr. 459, Kyōushoku Collection 2009, 83-87. Eine Transkription der Handschrift mit Einführung findet man auch in: WU 吴昶興 2015, 50-73.

[12] "Xu ting mishisuo jing" 序聽迷詩所經. Die deutsche Übersetzung der Texte in der weiteren Arbeit stammt von Zhu LI, wenn nicht anders vermerkt. Eine englische Übersetzung bietet Li TANG 2004, *A Study of the History of Nestorian Christianity in China and its Literature in Chinese. Together with a New English Translation of the Dunhuang Nestorian Documents*. 2nd revised edition, 145-156.

[13] Bibeltexte werden zitiert nach: Die Bibel. Lutherbibel Taschenausgabe ohne Apokryphen. Bibeltext in der revidierten Fassung von 1984. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

眾生若怕天尊，亦合怕懼　聖上．	Wenn man den himmlischen Herrn fürchtet, soll man auch den Kaiser fürchten. […]	Du sollst dir kein Bildnis noch irgendein Gleichnis machen, […]: Bete sie nicht an und diene ihnen nicht.
第三須怕父母，祇承父母，[…] 若孝父母并恭給所有．	Man soll die Eltern fürchten, sie ehren und ihnen alles zur Pflege Erforderliche geben[14]. […]	Du sollst den Namen des HERRN, deines Gottes, nicht missbrauchen.
第四愿者，如有受戒人，向一切眾生皆發善心，莫懷睢恶．	Das vierte Gebot[15] (ist): für all diejenigen, die die Gebote des himmlischen Herrn annehmen: Sie sollen allen Lebewesen gegenüber barmherzig sein, keine bösen Absichten sollen sie haben.	Gedenke des Sabbattages, dass du ihn heiligest.
第五愿者，眾生自莫煞生，亦莫諫他煞．	Das fünfte Gebot (ist): Alle Lebewesen sollen weder von sich aus (jemanden) töten, noch sollen sie anderen überreden (jemanden) zu töten.	Du sollst deinen Vater und deine Mutter ehren, […].
第六愿者，莫姦他人妻子．	Das sechste Gebot (ist): Man soll nicht der Frau eines anderen etwas Unrechtes antun.	Du sollst nicht töten.
第七愿者，莫作賊．	Das siebte Gebot (ist): Man soll nicht Diebstahl begehen.	Du sollst nicht ehebrechen.
第八、，眾生錢財，見他富貴并	Das achte (Gebot ist): Man soll sich nicht	Du sollst nicht stehlen.

14 Im darauf folgenden Absatz des Dokuments werden diese drei Gebote wiederholt, jedoch mit einer leichten Veränderumg in der Wortwahl: statt „fürchten“ wird das Wort „dienen“ benutzt, so lauten die ersten drei Gebote: erstens dem himmlischen Herrn zu dienen, zweitens dem Kaiser zu dienen und drittens den Eltern zu dienen.

15 Im chinesischen Original bedeutet das Wort „yuan“ (愿) im buddhistischen Kontext ein Versprechen (oder gar ein Gelübde im Fall der Mönche) gegenüber Buddha, um etwas Erbetenes zu erhalten. Hier entspricht es aber eher dem Wort „Gebot“.

有田宅奴婢，天睢妬[16]。	darüber freuen, wenn man Reichtümer anderer Lebewesen sieht, die Land, Häuser und Dienerschaft haben.	
第九愿者，有好妻子并好金屋，作文証加謀他人。	Das neunte Gebot (ist): Wenn man eine gute Frau[17] und ein mit Gold dekoriertes Haus[18] hat, (soll man nicht) falsche Zeugnisse ablegen, die jemand anderem zur Last sein werden.[19]	Du sollst nicht falsch Zeugnis reden wider deinen Nächsten.
第十愿者，受他寄物，并将费用天尊，并处分事極多。	Das zehnte Gebot (ist): Man soll (nicht) dem himmlischen Herrn mit Hab und Gut eines anderen dienen, der (dir) dieses anvertraut hat.	Du sollst nicht begehren deines Nächsten Haus. Du sollst nicht begehren deines Nächsten Frau, Knecht, Magd, Rind, Esel noch alles, was dein Nächster hat.

Bemerkenswert sind zunächst die inhaltlichen Änderungen, die im „Buch über Jesus“ auftauchen. Die Gebote im Hinblick auf Gott, die das Zentrum des jüdisch-christlichen Glaubens bilden, werden zu einem einzigen komprimiert, nämlich „man soll Gott fürchten und (ehrfürchtend) dienen“. Die Akzentuierung des Monotheismus ist dabei gegenüber der Ursprungsversion reduziert. Dass das Verbot, Abbilder von Lebewesen zu machen und diese anzubeten, und das Gebot, den Sabbattag zu halten, überhaupt nicht erwähnt wurden, deutet möglicherweise auf die Kompromissbereitschaft der syrisch-persischen Christen hin, da sie erkannten haben müssen, dass die Tradition der Ikonenanbetung in der chinesischen Gesellschaft unantastbar war. Diese Tradition zu verneinen

16 Das Zeichen „tian 天“ (der Himmel) im letzten Satzteil ist möglicherweise ein (versehentlicher) Fehler von „wu 勿“ (nicht).

17 An dieser Stelle würde ich eher die Singularform „Frau“ (i. S. v. Ehefrau) nehmen, obwohl aus dem Kontext sich nicht erschließt, ob „Frauen“, „die Frau“, oder aber „Frau und Kinder“ gemeint ist.

18 Der Ausdruck „jinwu“ (金屋) bedeutet wortwörtlich „ein mit Gold dekoriertes Zimmer“, im erweiterten Sinne ein prächtiges Haus. Der Ausdruck stammt aus dem 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr. von dem Kaiser Wudi 武帝(157-87 v. Chr., r. 141-87 v. Chr.) der Han-Dynastie. Als Kind behauptete er, dass er seine künftige Ehefrau in einem mit Gold ausgekleidete Zimmer unterbringen werde, das ihr würdig sei.

19 In diesem Gebot und im zehnten Gebot fehlt das Wort „nicht“, das in der Übersetzung hinzugefügt wurde. Dies lässt sich wahrscheinlich dadurch erklären, dass der Katalog sowohl Gebote als auch Verbote enthält. Wenn es um Verbote geht, musste das verneinende Wort „nicht“ vermutlich nicht erwähnt werden.

oder gar zu eliminieren, hätte wahrscheinlich zur Feindseligkeit der Chinesen geführt und die eigene Lebenssituation erschwert.[20]

Nicht nur inhaltliche Änderungen, sondern auch die veränderte Reihenfolge und die Verschiebung der Gewichtung der ersten drei Gebote im „Buch über Jesus“ können als Indizien für die Anpassung an die chinesische kulturelle Umgebung interpretiert werden[21]. In der jüdischen Tradition behandeln die ersten vier Gebote die Beziehung zwischen Gott und Menschen, während die anderen sechs Gebote zwischenmenschlichen Umgang zu regulieren suchen[22]. Im „Buch über Jesus“ sind aber die Gebote bezüglich der Gott-Menschen-Beziehung in einem einzigen Gebot zusammengefasst, das von Menschen, die „die Lehre bzw. Gebote des himmlischen Herrn annehmen“,[23] (Ehr)Furcht bzw. treuen Dienst gegenüber Gott verlangt. Dem Gebot, die Eltern zu fürchten und zu ehren, wurde immer noch eine besondere Bedeutung zugewiesen, da es als die erste Regel der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehung darstellt. Jedoch wurde zwischen diesem und dem ersten Gebot ein neues eingeschoben, nämlich den Kaiser zu fürchten und ihm zu dienen, und „wer den kaiserlichen Befehlen nicht gehorcht und sich dem Kaiser widersetzt, den sollen alle Menschen bzw. Lebewesen als Rebellen betrachten“.[24] Dadurch wird die Sonderstellung des Kaisers zwischen Gott und Menschen verdeutlicht.

3. Religiöse Dogmatik

Im Folgenden wird diese Version der Zehn Gebote, mit dem Schwerpunkt auf den ersten drei, zunächst auf der rein dogmatischen Ebene und anschließend auf der Ebene der Praxis genauer analysiert, vor allem in Hinsicht darauf, welche spezifisch chinesischen Elemente aufgenommen wurden und inwieweit sich diese von jüdisch-christlichen Lehre unterschieden.

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20 Ein Gegenbeispiel findet man in der katholischen Mission fast tausend Jahre später, als die Dominikaner und die Franziskaner darauf beharrten, alle nichtchristlichen Idole oder Ikone zu entfernen, da Idolatrie zu verwerfen und zu verdammen sei.

21 Dieser Aspekt wurde in der Arbeit von TIAN Haihau kurz angesprochen, jedoch bezog sie sich ausschließlich auf die Betonung der Kaiserverehrung direkt hinter dem ersten Gebot. Es fehlt also eine nähere Erläuterung über die Hervorhebung der kindlichen Pietät und eine zusammenhängende Analyse der ersten drei Gebote in ihrer Gesamtheit. Vgl. TIAN 2005, 158ff.

22 Der Autorin sind die nicht einheitlichen Zählungsweisen in der jüdischen, katholischen, protestantischen und orthodoxen Tradition bewusst. In der Arbeit wird die jüdische Zählung genommen, in der die ersten vier Gebote die Selbstvorstellung Gottes, das Fremdgötterverbot, das Bilderverbot und den Sabbatgebot umfassen, während die weiteren sechs Gebote mit dem Elterngebot anfangen.

23 Buch über Jesus, K. 59: “有人受天尊教，常道我受戒“.

24 Buch über Jesus, K. 64-65: “如有人不取圣上驱使，不伏其人，在于众生，即是返(逆)”.

3.1. Die Kaiserverehrung: der Kaiser als Herrscher durch das Mandat des Himmels

In der chinesisch-konfuzianischen Tradition hatte der Kaiser eine vermittelnde und verbindende Rolle zwischen dem Himmel, der höchsten transzendentalen, aber nicht personifizierten Macht und der menschlichen Gesellschaft inne. Er wurde zwar nicht als Gott oder Gottheit angebetet, aber er herrschte im Auftrag des Himmels, weshalb seine Herrschaft einen gewissen religiösen bzw. semireligiösen Charakter aufwies. Durch regelmäßige Opferrituale, Kalendergebung und andere religiöse oder kultische Akte pflegte der Kaiser die gesellschaftliche Ordnung in Harmonie mit der kosmischen Macht zu bringen und seiner Herrschaft dadurch die Legitimationsgrundlage zu schaffen.[25] So standen Religion und Herrschaft in engem Zusammenhang, beide sind in der Person und in dem Amt des Kaisers vereint, indem die Religion „die politische Ordnung nicht nur (spiegelt), sondern sie auch (zementiert)".[26]

Die Hinzufügung der Kaiserverehrung in den Katalog der göttlichen Gebote und die Betonung, dass alle Menschen den Kaiser fürchten und ihm treu dienen sollen, wird dadurch begründet, dass er „von Gott geboren sei"[27] und dass „das Glück der Vorfahren bzw. Vorgänger der Kaiser immens (war). Der himmlische Herr hilft ihnen, ihr Amt auszuüben. Es ist nicht ihre eigene Leistung, sondern die des himmlischen Herrn".[28] Zugleich wurde davor gewarnt, rebellisch zu sein, indem man die Befehle des Kaisers missachtet und sich ihm widersetzt.[29] Die hier aufgeführten Passagen sind den Historikern schon früh aufgefallen[30] und wurden als ein Hauptmerkmal der gezielten Anpassungsversuche der persisch-syrischen Christen an die traditionell chinesische Kaiserverehrung interpretiert. Es gilt aber gleichzeitig zu beachten, dass der Gehorsam gegenüber weltlichen

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25 Hierzu siehe u. a. GERNET 1984, 123-163. Obwohl Gernet in seinem Werk überwiegend die Jesuitenmission in China in der frühen Neuzeit untersuchte, gelang es ihm, einen Überblick über die gesamte Entwicklungsgeschichte der konfuzianischen Lehre von der klassischen Periode bis zur Etablierung des Neo-Konfuzianismus im 16. / 17. Jahrhundert zu geben. Über die Sakralität des chinesischen Kaisertums siehe auch: SEIWERT in ERKENS (Hrsg.) 2002 245-265.

26 GERNET 1984, 123.

27 Buch über Jesus, K. 74: „此聖上皆是神生". Jedenfalls benutzte der Autor hierfür das Wort „Gott(heit)" statt des „himmlischen Herrn", der durchgehenden Bezeichnung für Gott den Vater (Jehova). Es stellt sich die Frage, ob diese beiden Benennungen gleichbedeutend sind oder aber inhaltliche Unterschiede aufweisen.

28 Buch über Jesus, K. 62-63: 聖上前身福利, 天尊補任, 亦無自乃天尊耶, 屬自作聖上. Vgl. die englische Übersetzung bei TANG 2004, 149: "the fortune of the predecessors of the Emperor was immense. The heavenly Lord helps them to take the office. It is not the effort of their own but of the heavenly Lord".

29 Buch über Jesus K. 63-65. Hier erfolgt keine wortwörtliche Übersetzung, sondern eine inhaltliche Wiedergabe.

30 Vgl. CHAO 赵璧础 1990, 176f; GONG 龚天民 1960; LIU 刘伟民 in *Lianhe shuyuan xuebao* No. 1 (1962), 1-64. ZHU 朱谦之, 140-145.

Herrschern und der Aspekt des treuen Dienens in den neutestamentlichen, insbesondere in den paulinischen Schriften eine ähnliche Betonung wie hier im „Buch über Jesus“ finden[31]. Die Besonderheit der Jingjiao-Lehre besteht darin – auch wenn dieser Aspekt nur am Rande angesprochen wurde –, dass der Kaiser als „von Gott geboren“ angesehen wurde. Dessen herrschaftliche Legitimation war somit noch stärker und deutlicher betont als bei Paulus.[32] Die Sakralität des Kaisers wird jedoch nicht allein durch den Einschub nach dem ersten Gebot und die wiederholte Aufforderung zum Dienst für den Kaiser verdeutlicht, sondern auch durch eine formale bzw. graphische Hervorhebung, nämlich das Einrücken einer Leerstelle vor dem Wort „Kaiser“, wodurch in den klassisch-chinesischen Schriften häufig Respekt ausgedrückt wird.[33]

Allerdings muss man hierzu die damaligen politischen Umstände beachten. Während des 7. Jahrhunderts begann in China ein Prozess, sich nach einer langen Periode der Spaltung wieder zu einem Reich zu formieren, das von einer zentralistischen Regierung beherrscht wurde, an deren Spitze der Kaiser stand und dessen hohen Beamten Gelehrte waren, die die konfuzianische Lehre als Maßstab des individuellen Verhaltens, der sozialen Ordnung und der politischen Herrschaft ansahen, und sich bemühten, dies auch unter dem Volk zu verbreiten.[34] In seinem himmlischen Auftrag verfügte der Kaiser zumindest theoretisch über die absolute Macht über das Land und die Menschen, die in seinem Reich lebten. Für die fremdstämmigen Christen, die religiös und ethnisch in der Minderheit waren, bedeutete dies wohl, dass sie die persönliche Gunst und Gnade des Kaisers, zumindest seine stillschweigende Duldung, nicht verlieren durften, wenn sie im Reich als legitime Einwohner leben und gegebenenfalls ihren Glauben öffentlich praktizieren wollten. Die allgemeine Feindseligkeit gegenüber Ausländern seit der Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts, die sich schließlich infolge der „Religionsverfolgung“ während der Huichang-Periode bis zur Vertreibung der fremdstämmigen Christen, zusammen mit den Zoroastriern etc., in die

[31] Römer 13:1-2: „Jedermann sei untertan der Obrigkeit, die Gewalt über ihn hat. Denn es ist keine Obrigkeit außer von Gott; wo aber Obrigkeit ist, die ist von Gott angeordnet. Wer sich nun der Obrigkeit widersetzt, der widerstrebt der Anordnung Gottes; die ihr aber widerstreben, ziehen sich selbst das Urteil zu“; und Epheser 6:5-6: „Ihr Sklaven, seid gehorsam euren irdischen Herren mit Furcht und Zittern, in Einfalt eures Herzens als dem Herrn Christus; nicht mit Dienst allein vor Augen, um Menschen zu gefallen, sondern als Knechte Christi, die den Willen Gottes tun von Herzen“, um nur zwei Beispiele zu nennen.

[32] Eine ähnliche Legitimationsbegründung findet man in der Salbung des Königs aus dem Alten Testament, indem von Gott bestimmte Könige wie David von Propheten gesalbt werden mussten. Die Salbung symbolisierte damit die Herrschaft im Auftrag Gottes.

[33] Dies ist vorläufig nur meine Vermutung, denn das Wort „Kaiser“ taucht im betroffenen Dokument 15 mal auf, davon dieses Einrücken aber an 2 Stellen fehlt. Die Schreibweise - wahrscheinlich der Kopisten - ist daher weder einheitlich noch konsequent. Ob man daraus einen generalisierten Schluss zieht, bedarf noch einer genaueren Überlegung.

[34] Über die historischen Umstände der Wiedervereinigung und der Wandlung in der politischen Struktur siehe: HUANG 2010, 78-137. Dazu auch HÖCKELMANN in *China Heute* 179, Nr. 3 (2013), 71-180. Hier S. 174.

Grenzgebieten zuspitzte, bestätigt die Notwendigkeit der (Über)Lebensstrategie von Alopen und seinen Nachfolgern.

3.2. Kindliche Pietät: Grundlage der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung

Um sich im ganzen Reich etablieren zu können, genügte den Christen die Beschränkung auf die Unterstützung der Hofadligen nicht. Sie mussten auch darauf achten, dass die von ihnen propagierte Lehre der chinesischen Volkskultur nicht widersprach und keinen Widerstand seitens anderer sozialer Schichten hervorrief. Im Grunde genommen blieb die chinesische Gesellschaft seit dem 2. Jahrhundert vor Christus vom Konfuzianismus geprägt, in dem die Morallehre, die auf streng einzuhaltender Hierarchisierung und Ritualisierung aufgebaut ist, für eine harmonische politische und gesellschaftliche Ordnung sorgen muss.

Ein fundamentales Element dieser Morallehre bildete die kindliche Pietät. Die Eltern zu lieben und zu ehren, ihnen zu dienen und bedingungslos zu gehorchen, gehöre, so Konfuzius und seine Schüler, zum speziellen Merkmal des Menschenseins, durch das sich die Menschen von den Tieren unterschieden[35]. Dies galt für alle Mitglieder der Gesellschaft, und selbst der Kaiser war nicht von dieser Pflicht ausgenommen. Er sollte sich diesbezüglich tadellos verhalten und somit seinen Untertanen ein gutes Vorbild geben. Posthum wurde jedem Kaiser der Tang-Dynastie der Ehrentitel „pietätvoll (xiao 孝)“ gewährt. Welche besondere Bedeutung die Pietät während der Tang-Dynastie erhielt, sieht man auch darin, dass das „Buch der kindlichen Pietät“, ein Klassiker des Konfuzianismus, von Kaiser Xuanzong im Jahr 722 persönlich kommentiert wurde. Fast zwanzig Jahre später (744) war jede Familie im Reich anlässlich eines kaiserlichen Ediktes dazu verpflichtet, ein Exemplar vom „Buch der kindlichen Pietät“ zu besitzen.[36]

[35] „Lunyu, Weizheng“《論語 為政》 „Analects, Weizheng: “今之孝者, 是謂能养. 至於犬马, 皆能有养. 不敬, 何以别乎?“ Zitiert nach der Online-Quelle: gj.zdic.net/archive.php?aid=2667 (24.09.2015). Eigene Übersetzung: „Heutzutage versteht man unter der ‚kindlichen Pietät‘, die Eltern zu pflegen und sich um sie zu sorgen. Nun dies tun auch Hunde und Pferde, So wie kann man zwischen (Menschen und Tieren) unterscheiden, wenn Menschen sich (ihren Eltern gegenüber) nicht respektvoll verhielten?

[36] 舊唐書 本纪第八 玄宗上: „(开元十年) 六月辛丑, 上訓注孝經, 頒於天下“. Eigene Übersetzung: „(Im zehnten Jahr der Kaiyuan-Periode) Im sechsten Monat, am Tag des Xin-Chou, kommentierte der Kaiser ‚Buch der kindlichen Pietät‘, und ließ das kommentierte Buch im Reich verbreiten.“; „本纪第九 玄宗下: „(天寶三载) 詔天下民間家藏孝經一本” Meine eigene Übersetzung: „(Im dritten Jahr der Tianbao-Periode) erließ der Kaiser ein Edikt, in dem angeordnet wurde, jedes Haushalt im Reich solle ein Exemplar des ‚Buch(es) der kindlichen Pietät‘ aufbewahren“. Zitiert nach der Online-Quelle: gj.zdic.net/archive.php?aid=3505 und gj.zdic.net/archive.php?aid=3506 (24.09.2015) „Die alten offiziellen Geschichtsbücherder Tang-Dynastie, Biographie des Kaisers Xuanzong“.

Auf die kindliche Pietät wurde ein großer Wert gelegt, weil im untrennbaren Zusammenhang damit die Treue zum Kaiser stand. In der konfuzianischen Vorstellung spiegelte sich die Gesellschaftsstruktur im familiären Haushalt wider und vice versa. Dessen Vorsteher, der Familienvater, sollte die Funktion eines Herrschers ausüben, und von ihm wurde allen anderen in diesem Haushalt jeweils gemäß der Rangordnung entsprechende Aufgaben zugeteilt, ähnlich wie den Beamten in der Regierung. So nahm man an, dass nur diejenigen, die ihre eigenen Eltern zu ehren wussten, treue Diener des Kaisers unter allen Umständen sein konnten. Die Treue zum Kaiser stand gewissermaßen an der Spitze einer Pietätspraxis im weitesten Sinne. Das Ziel bestand in der Selbstverwirklichung und der vollständigen Entfaltung der Persönlichkeit.[37] Deshalb ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass die Christen die Pietät als drittes Gebot nannten und wiederholt betonten, man solle die Eltern ehren.

Es muss meines Erachtens aber auch berücksichtigt werden, dass das Gebot, den Eltern zu gehorchen und sie zu ehren in der jüdisch-christlichen Lehre ebenfalls eine sehr wichtige Stellung einnimmt. Es steht an erster Stelle derjenigen Gebote, die die zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen regeln, vermutlich aus demselben Grund wie im konfuzianischen China: Die Beziehung zwischen Eltern und Kindern ist die Grundlage der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung. Obwohl die Bedeutung der (diesseitigen) familiären Beziehungen in den Evangelien durch eine stärkere Betonung der spirituellen Verbindung zu Gott relativiert worden war[38], wurde sie im paulinischen Schrifttum wiederum hervorgehoben, insbesondere dort, wo die Verhaltensregeln für den Alltag aufgestellt worden sind.[39] So liest man beispielsweise im Brief an die Epheser: „Ehre Vater und Mutter, das ist das erste Gebot, *das eine Verheißung hat* (kursiv von Z. L.): auf dass dir's wohl gehe und du lange lebst auf Erden".[40] Diese Verheißung wurde im „Buch über Jesus" entsprechend übersetzt: „Wenn jemand zunächst dem himmlischen Herrn, dann dem Kaiser und anschließend den Eltern fehlerfrei / tadellos dienen kann, wird er Segen vom himmlischen Herrn erhalten,[41]" und „alle Lebewesen, wenn sie den Eltern pietätsvoll gehorchen und sie gut pflegen, sie

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[37] „Xiaojing" 孝經, „Buch der kindlichen Pietät" : "夫孝, 始於事亲, 中於事君, 終於立身". Zitiert nach der Online-Quelle: gj.zdic.net/archive.php?aid=2442 (24.09.2015). Eigene Übersetzung: „Die Pietät beginnt damit, den Eltern und Verwandten zu dienen, beinhaltet dann den Dienst gegenüber dem Kaiser und endet mit der Vollendung der eigenen Persönlichkeit".

[38] Jesus sagte z. B., „Wer Vater und Mutter mehr liebt als mich, der ist meiner nicht wert; und wer Sohn oder Tochter mehr liebt als mich, der ist meiner nicht wert" (Matthäus 10:37). Eine ähnliche Aufforderung liest man auch in Lk. 14:26. Verdeutlicht wird hier die Zugehörigkeit zu einer spirituellen „Familie", deren Mitglieder all diejenigen sind, die Gottes Weg folgen. Dagegen stellt die weltliche Verwandtschaft manchmal eine Last dar, durch die Menschen gehindert werden, Gott zu folgen.

[39] Diesbezüglich siehe u. a. den Brief an die Epheser.

[40] Epheser 6:2.

[41] Buch über Jesus, Kolumne (K). 71-72: „若人先事天尊及聖上及事父母不闕, 此人於天尊得福".

ehren und sie reichlich versorgen, werden, wenn sie selbst im Sterben liegen, das himmlische Dao als (neues) Zuhause erhalten“.[42]

4. Religiöse Praxis

Sich zu einem bestimmten Glauben zu bekennen bedeutet für die Anhänger der jeweiligen Religion zweierlei: Dem Inhalt der jeweiligen Lehre innerlich zuzustimmen und zugleich die eigene Lebensweise nach ihr auszurichten. Phänomene der Enkulturation – in unserem Fall diejenigen, die sich im Prozess der Integration der syrisch-persischen Christen in die chinesische Kultur und Gesellschaft äußern[43] – zeigen sich nicht allein in der Anpassung der Dogmatik, sondern auch in der sichtbaren Lebensführung im Alltag, konkret in der Ausübung von Bräuchen und Ritualen, beziehungsweise deren Ablehnung. In Bräuchen und Rituale finden die abstrakte Morallehre und religiöse Dogmatik ihren konkreten Ausdruck.

4.1. Praxis der Kaiserverehrung: Portraits der Kaiser in der Kirche und Dienst am Hof

Anhand des Berichts auf der Xi’an-Stele kann man davon ausgehen, dass Alopen und möglicherweise auch seine Glaubensbrüder sich beim Kaiser Taizong 太宗 beliebt machen konnten. Als Zeichen des Wohlwollens ließ der Kaiser ein Kloster[44] in der Hauptstadt errichten und gab Alopen die Erlaubnis, Mönche zu rekrutieren. Zugleich erhielten die „zuständigen Ämter den Befehl, ein Portrait des Kaisers zu erstellen und dieses auf die Wand des Klosters zu kopieren“.[45] Dies geschah im 12. Jahr der Zhenguan-Periode 貞觀 (638), drei Jahre nach der Ankunft Alopens in Chang’an. Fast hundert Jahre später (742) ließ der Kaiser Xuanzong 玄宗, Urenkel von Taizong, die Portraits der „fünf Heiligen (Kaiser) ins Kloster bringen“.[46] So erlebte die christliche Kirche dank der Zuneigung des

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[42] Buch über Jesus, K. 82-83: „衆生孝养父母，恭承不闕，临命終之時乃得天道為舍宅“. Mit dem „himmlischen Dao“ ist wohl das Himmelreich Gottes gemeint.

[43] Über die Definition und Merkmale der Enkulturation siehe: CHU 2011, 201ff.

[44] „所司即於京義寧坊造大秦寺一所，度僧廿一人“: Das zuständige Amt ließ ein Kloster im Yining Bezirk der Hauptstadt bauen, und 21 Mönche wurden aufgenommen. Das Wort „寺 si“ bedeutet zwar „Kloster“, aber hier ist es nicht klar, ob es sich dabei um eine Kirche oder ein Kloster handelt.

[45] „旋令有司將帝写真，轉摸寺壁“. Für eine englische Übersetzung siehe SAEKI 1951, 58: „Immediately afterwards, the proper officials were again ordered to take a faithful portrait of the Emperor, and to have it copied on the walls of the monastry“. Vgl. auch Anm. 15 auf S. 89. Für eine französische Übersetzung siehe PELLIOT in FORTE 1996, 175f: „Ensuite ordre fut donné aux autorités de reproduire par le dessin un portrait de l’Empereur sur la mur du monastère“. Im Folgenden wird immer die englische Übersetzung angegeben.

[46] „天寶初，令大將軍高力士送五聖写真寺內安置“. SAEKI 1951, 60: „In the early part of the period T’ein-pao (742 A. D.), he gave orders to his general Kao Li-Shih to carry the faithful portraits of the Five Emperors and to have them placed securely in the monastery”. Dabei geht

Kaisers Xuanzong nach einer Phase der Stagnation wieder einen Aufschwung. Aus Anlass einer festlichen Feier[47] veranstalteten die Christen unter der Leitung des Bischofs Jihe 佶和 (George) eine rituelle Zeremonie im kaiserlichen Palast, und „infolgedessen ließ der Kaiser seine eigenhändige Widmung auf dem (Haupt)Tor des Klosters hängen, und (so) trägt die Fronttafel die Inschrift des Drachens (d. h. des Kaisers)[48]“. Während des An-Shi-Aufruhrs standen die Christen solidarisch auf der Seite der kaiserlichen Armee, und eine der wichtigsten Figuren in der Geschichte des Jingjiao, Yisi 伊斯 (Yazedbouzid), erhielt neben den Amtstiteln als „Kuang-lu-ta-fu, with the decoration-rank of the Gold (signet) and the Purple Robe, […] the Lieutenant-Governor-General of the Northern Region, and the Assistant Over-Seer oft he Examination Hall“[49] auch die höchste Ehre, die ein Mönch, sei er ein buddhistischer oder christlicher, erhalten konnte, nämlich „eine purpurne Tracht“ tragen zu dürfen. Mit Hilfe seiner finanziellen Unterstützung und zum Angedenken seiner Wohltaten wurde die Stele in der Hauptstadt errichtet, die seit ihrer Entdeckung im 17. Jahrhundert zur Hauptquelle der historischen Forschung über Jingjiao geworden ist.[50] Es lag dabei durchaus in der Tradition der persischen Christen, dass sie sich politisch engagierten und somit die Herrscher als Schutzpatrone gewannen.[51].

Auf der Stele wurde außer einem historisch-narrativen Bericht auch ein Lobgesang (颂 song), eigentlich der Hauptteil dieses Dokuments, in Form klassischer paralleler Lyrik verfasst, in dem die Hilfeleistungen einzelner Kaiser für die Entwicklung des Jingjiao gepriesen wurden. Dadurch brachten die Christen ihre Treue zum Herrscherhaus und ihre Dankbarkeit für die kaiserliche Unterstützung zum Ausdruck.

Neben den oben genannten namentlich bekannten Mönchen und kirchlichen Amtsträgern, die eine aktive Rolle in politisch-religiösen Angelegenheiten spielten und sich in irgendeiner Form in der „Mission“ engagierten, lebten noch

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es vermutlich um die Portraits der ersten fünf Kaiser der Tang-Dynastie. Das Wort „Heilige (sheng)“ wurde im klassischen Chinesisch häufig als Synonym für Kaiser oder alles, was kaiserlich war, benutzt, beispielsweise wurde ein kaiserliches Edikt als „shengzhi“ bezeichnet.

47 Zum Hintergrund siehe: DUAN 段晴 in RONG (Hrsg.) 2003, 434-472; hier S. 444-446. Auch bei GE 2006c, 242-251, hier S. 246. Im Originaltext ist nicht eindeutig geschildert, aus welchem Anlass diese Zeremonie organisiert wurde. Es gibt die Vermutung, dass es sich dabei um eine Weilmachtsfeier handelte, also die Geburt Jesu Christi. Das Kloster muss dasselbe sein, welches auf Erlaubnis von Taizong errichtet worden war. Später unter der Herrschaft des Kaisers Daizong (r. 763-779) nahmen die Christen jedenfalls an der Feier des kaiserlichen Geburtstags teil, wie es weiter im Bericht steht. Hierzu siehe: SAEKI 1951, 95f.

48 „於是天題寺榜, 額戴龍書“. Traditionell symbolisierte der Drache den Kaiser, so wurde z. B. seine Kleidung als Drachentracht bezeichnet.

49 Übersetzung von SAEKI 1951, 63.

50 Dazu siehe Anm. 9.

51 GE 2006c, 246. Vgl. auch ZHU 1997, 39-46, Verbreitung der ostsyrischen Kirche in Persien und die Beziehung zwischen Christen und dem persischen Königtum.

andere Christen im Reich, deren Beteiligung am religiösen Leben teilweise durch Inschriften auf ihren Grabsteinen nachzuweisen ist, aber über die teilweise auch nur Mutmaßungen anzustellen sind. Einige von ihnen waren bekannt für ihre hervorragenden spezifischen Kenntnisse in Astronomie und Medizin und waren in der Regierung als Astronomen oder Ärzte tätig. So standen sie direkt im kaiserlichen Dienst. Währenddessen wurde jedoch ihre religiöse Identität als Christen weit in den Hintergrund gedrängt[52]. Die Tätigkeiten der fremdstämmigen Christen im öffentlichen Dienst standen im Einklang mit der Aufforderung im „Buch über Jesus", dass man dem Kaiser (treu) dienen sollte. Damit werden Dogmatik und Praxis in Verbindung gesetzt.

4.2. Praxis der kindlichen Pietät: Begräbniszeremonien und Kontinuität im Glauben

Pietätvoll zu sein bedeutet nicht nur, den Eltern zu Lebzeiten zu gehorchen und sie zu ehren, sondern sie auch nach ihrem Tod durch feierliche Begräbniszeremonie und lebenslanges Gedenken zu würdigen. Im Idealfall sollte man „verstorbenen Vorfahren genauso (gut) dienen wie den Lebenden".[53] Obwohl diese Aufforderung sich ursprünglich nur auf Könige und Fürsten bezog, wurde sie im Laufe der Zeit zu einem allgemein anerkannten und geltenden Verhaltensprinzip. Respektvoll mit den verstorbenen Vorfahren umzugehen, als ob sie immer noch anwesende Familienmitglieder wären, entwickelte sich allmählich zu einer Art Ahnenkult, der in der späteren katholischen und protestantischen Mission heftige Diskussionen und Streitigkeiten verursachen sollte.[54]

Mit einer ähnlichen Situation sahen sich auch die persisch-syrischen Christen konfrontiert, wobei sie anscheinend weniger ein Problem damit hatten, Verwandter und Eltern durch feierliche Zeremonien zu gedenken, an denen nicht nur Familienmitglieder, sondern auch die im Kloster lebenden Mönche teilnahmen. Dies beweist der narrative Berichtteil auf der Luoyang Steinsäule,[55] in

[52] Beispiele stellen z. B. der Hofarzt Qin Minghe und die Familie Li Su im Astronomischen Amt. Siehe: HUANG in *Zhongshan daxue xuebao* Vol. 42, No. 5 (2002), 61-67 u. 99. RONG in RONG 2001, 238-257.

[53] 《中庸》„事死如事生，事亡如事存，孝之至也".

[54] Während des im 17. Jahrhundert bitter debattierten Ritenstreits wurde z. B. heftig diskutiert, ob Familienmitglieder, wenn sie in ihrem Zuhause eine Tafel aufstellten, die mit den Namen der Vorfahren und dem Ausdruck „Sitz der Seele" beschriftet war, tatsächlich an die physische Existenz der Seelen in dieser Tafel glaubten und konkret materielle Vorteile durch die Ehrerbietung vor dieser Tafel daraus ziehen wollten. Dieser Streit wurde zwar offiziell durch die päpstlichen Entscheidungen Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts beendet, aber in der Praxis der Chinamission der Katholiken und Protestanten wirkte er bis ins 20. Jahrhundert fort.

[55] Die Luoyang Steinsäule, bekannt unter der englischen Bezeichnung "the Luoyang Stone Pillar", wurde als Gedenkstein für eine gewisse Madame An im Jahr 814 errichtet. In dem darauf eingemeißelten narrativen Bericht erfährt man Details über die Zeremonie der Grabverlegung und die Familienmitglieder. Über die Entdeckung und die Untersuchung dieser Steinsäule sie-

dem die kindliche Pietät als das Hauptmotiv, die Steinsäule errichten zu lassen, explizit angeführt wurde.[56] Der am Ende stehenden Namenliste kann man entnehmen, dass die Zeremonie der Verlegung des Grabs eine bedeutende Veranstaltung gewesen sein muss, da zu den Teilnehmern weltliche und geistliche Würdenträger zählten.[57]

Des Weiteren gehörte es anscheinend zu den regulären Aufgaben der Mönche, für Verstorbene zu beten. So liest man beispielsweise folgendes im Bericht auf der Xi'an-Stele: „Sie (die Christen) preisen Gott und beten sieben Male (täglich), und sie beten sowohl für Lebende als auch für Tote".[58] Offen bleiben muss, ob zu jener Zeit der Ahnenkult, d. h. die Praxis, Familienvorfahren mit Opfern und Ritualen zu gedenken und für sie zu beten, um umgekehrt den Segen zu empfangen, bereits fester Bestandteil einer konfuzianisch-chinesischen Tradition geworden war, die nicht nur eine zivile Handlung darstellte, sondern eher religiöse Charaktere aufwies.

Die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gemeinde funktionierte also ähnlich wie die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Familie: Sie ermöglicht nicht nur die individuelle Identitätsbildung, sondern dient auch als verbindendes und zusammenhaltendes Element der entsprechenden Mitglieder. Anhand der Untersuchungen der Inschriften auf den Grabsteinen von Familie Mi Jifen 米繼芬 und Familie Li Su 李素 kann man zu Recht annehmen, dass üblicherweise eine Kontinuität im Glauben innerhalb Familie zu finden war und sich daraus eine familiäre Tradition herausbildete[59]. Dies gilt besonders für die ethnischen und religiösen Minderheiten, die weit entfernt von ihrem Ursprungsland leben mussten und ihre eigene Glaubensidentität zu bewahren vermochten.[60] Ein solches Phänomen kann man sowohl bei der Familie Mi als auch bei der Familie Li beobachten.

he den von GE Chengyong herausgegebenen Sammelband: *Jingjiao Yizhen* 景教遺珍 *[Precious Nestorian Relics]* 2009.

56 TANG 2004, 144: „Being a direct heir indebted to my family, I regret that I did not show my filial piety and sincerity [to the deceased]".

57 Für die unvollständige Namenliste mit der entsprechenden Übersetzung ins Englische siehe: TANG in GE (Hrsg.) 2009, 134-156, hier S. 146-147. Die Unvollständigkeit dieser Namenliste lässt sich damit erklären, dass die untere Hälfte des Stone Pillars verloren ist.

58 Bericht auf der Xi'an-Stele: „七時礼讚, 大庇存亡". Siehe englische Übersetzung von SAEKI 1951, 56: „Seven times a day they meet for worship and praise, and earnestly they offer prayers for the living as well as for the dead".

59 Inschrift auf dem Grabstein Mi Jifen, „公有二男, … 幼曰僧思圓, 住大秦寺": Der geehrte Herr hat zwei Söhne … Der jüngere (Sohn) heißt Mönch Siyuan, (und er ist) wohnhaft im Daqin-Kloster". Zitiert nach GE 2006b, 232-241, hier S. 233.

60 Vgl. GE 2006, 239. Über Li Su und seine Familie siehe: RONG 2001.

4.3. Fazit

Wenn wir den Bericht auf der Xi'an-Stele über die Ankunft und Tätigkeit von Alopen in der Reichshauptstadt als glaubwürdig ansehen, können wir davon ausgehen, dass er einen relativ freundlichen Empfang am Hof genießen konnte und eine entspannte Beziehung mit dem Kaiser und einigen wenigen hohen Beamten pflegte, auch wenn deren Interesse an ihm und seinem Herkunftsland wahrscheinlich nicht ausschließlich religiöser Natur war.[61] Dass Alopen sich im kaiserlichen Palast aufhalten durfte und seine Übersetzungsarbeit – wenn er nicht allein arbeitete, so musste er doch die leitende Figur gewesen sein – durchführen konnte, deutet darauf hin, dass er versuchte, den einheimischen gebildeten Chinesen seine Religion vorzustellen und sie als Unterstützer, Patronen und möglichst auch als Gläubige zu gewinnen. Die erste Generation der Christen suchte somit Anhänger nicht nur unter ihren eigenen Landsleuten, sondern sie bemühten sich auch, den Glauben unter den Einheimischen zu verbreiten. Um dieses Ziel zu erreichen, übersetzten Christen einerseits Passagen aus der Heiligen Schrift, die in ihrer Lehre von grundlegender Bedeutung waren (wie z. B. die Schöpfungsgeschichte, das Leben und Wirken Jesu sowie die Auferstehung), und sie stellten diese in Katechismen ähnlichen Schriften zusammen. Andererseits nahmen sie dabei auch bewusst chinesische Ideen auf, die im Wesentlichen klassisch-konfuzianische Gedankengut aufweisen. Diese bewusste Anpassung an die einheimische Kultur erfolgte sowohl in der Dogmatik als auch in der Praxis und durchzog die gesamte Geschichte der syrischen Kirche in der Tang-Dynastie.

Allerdings ist es meines Erachtens nicht angemessen, eine pauschale Beurteilung bezüglich der Enkulturation zu treffen oder zu behaupten, dass die persisch-syrischen Christen sich von Anfang an zu sehr an die chinesische Kultur assimiliert und dadurch ihr Glaubensfundament verloren hätten, weshalb die Kirche als Institution nicht langfristig Bestand haben konnte, wie es ähnliches auch den Jesuiten zu Unrecht vorgeworfen wurde. Meiner Ansicht nach muss man erstens zwischen zwei Phasen der Entwicklung des Jingjiao unterscheiden, nämlich der Gründungsphase und der Erneuerungsphase. Während die Gründungsphase mit dem Vertreter Alopen überwiegend durch eine Annäherung an die konfuzianische Tradition geprägt war, wurde die zweite Phase (Jingjing) stärker durch buddhistische und daoistische Lehren beeinflusst, die möglicherweise zu Irritation führen konnten, um welche Religion es sich eigentlich handelte. Zweitens bedeutet eine Anpassung an die konfuzianische Lehre nicht

[61] Es gibt z. B. die Vermutung bzgl. der Interpretation des Satzes „(der Kaiser) erkundigt sich bei (Alopen) nach dem Dao (Weg)", dass der Kaiser Taizong Alopen nicht, oder nicht nur nach seinem Glauben befragte, sondern wahrscheinlich auch nach den politischen und militärischen Umständen in Persien und in den Grenzgebieten entlang der Seidenstraße, um künftige Unruhen oder Kriege mit den Völkern in jenen Gebieten zu vermeiden bzw. diese zu gewinnen. Siehe dazu: GE 2006a, 212-231, hier S. 217f.

zwangsläufig die Aufgabe oder den Verlust der christlichen Identität. Die Diskrepanz zwischen der konfuzianischen und der jüdisch-christlichen Ethik scheint auf den ersten Blick größer zu sein als dann die inhaltliche Analyse und Kontextualisierung offenbaren. Besonders hinsichtlich der familiären Beziehung, der Grundlage der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung, sind Ähnlichkeiten und Parallelen zwischen der konfuzianischen Lehre und der alt- sowie neutestamentlichen Tradition, konkret den Zehn Geboten, nicht zu übersehen.[62]

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[62] Vgl. YANG in LIU Xiaofeng 1995, 397-412, hier S. 403-406 über die Ethik. Zum Schluss möchte ich noch kurz darauf hinweisen, dass die anderen Gebote im „Buch über Jesus den Messias", insbesondere diejenigen, die die privaten Besitztümer zum Gegenstand haben, in Inhalt und Ausformulierung leicht vom originalen Text abweichen. In solchen Abweichungen spiegeln sich wahrscheinlich die zeitgenössischen Lebensumstände der Christen wider, von denen die meisten Kaufleute waren, deren Leben hauptsächlich aus geschäftlichen Handlungen bestehen sollten. Dies bedarf allerdings weiterer Untersuchungen, die ich in der künftigen Arbeit fortsetzen werde.

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THE SACRAMENTS OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

Most Rev. Mar Awa Royel
Bishop of California

First and foremost, in the Western theological jargon the word 'sacrament' is spoken of. It comes from the Latin *sacramentum*, which originally denoted a sacred oath; in general, it was the oath that a Roman soldier gave to Caesar upon the soldier's inscription in the Roman army.[1] It had, therefore, a sacred tone to it—one solemnly vowed to uphold and defend Caesar and the Roman Empire. In the Greek-speaking East, the word for sacrament is *mysterion*, and in its origins, it refers to the sacred, secret Mystery Cults of the Greek religion (the secret rites of 'Bacchius' come immediately to mind). Only those inducted into these sacred rites would be able to know the 'mystery' and what it entails.

The Assyrian Church of the East makes use of the term *rāzā* to denote 'sacrament' or 'mystery'. It comes from the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) term "raz", meaning something concealed; hidden.[2] It must have made its way into Assyrian and then Aramaic sometime in the 4th or 5th century B.C.[3]

A *rāzā*, or sacrament, is essentially a mystery through which God acts to impart to us his grace, but we don't know how this happens. However, we do feel the operation (i.e. working) of the Holy Spirit in us through these signs of God's love and mercy. In essence, the sacraments are "outward signs of God's inner grace." We may further define the sacraments as being the material means through which God communicates to us his divine grace, of which we are in need on a daily basis in our lives for our edification, sanctification and utter salvation, and a share in everlasting life, made efficacious by the Paschal Mystery completed in and by Christ.

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1 The first Christian writer to use the word 'sacrament' was Tertullian (3rd century), who explained that through Baptism we are 'enlisted' into the army of Christ.

2 In the Proto-Aryan or Sanskrit form it is pronounced *rahas*. It occurs in Daniel 2:18, 19, 27-30, 47; 4:9. Interestingly, the term *raz* also occurs in the Qumran texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls some 55 times! Middle Persian, which made use of the Aramaic script, is dated from about 300 BC to 800 AD.

3 For more on the understanding of *rāzā* and its etymology, see: POOVANNIKUNNEL 1989, 5-9 and *passim*.

'Mystery' (*rāzā*) in the Old & New Testaments

The word *mystery* (Aramaic *rāzā*, Greek *mysterion*) occurs first in the Old Testament, and specifically in the Aramaic portions of Daniel 2:18; 2:27-30, 47; 4:9).[4] The *rāzā* in this context is the meaning of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which only the man of God was able to interpret and 'reveal' (Syr. *gāle*). In the New Testament, the word "mystery" is mentioned some 28 times. It is to be found in: Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; Romans 11:25; 16:25; I Corinthians 2:1; 2:7; 4:1; 14:2; 15:51; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3; 3:4; 3:9; 5:32; 6:19; Colossians 1:26; 1:27; 2:2; 4:3; II Thessalonians 2:7; I Timothy 3:9; 3:16; Revelation 1:20; 10:7; 17:5; 17:7.
The first and most important understanding of 'mystery' (*rāzā*) is the one given by the Lord Jesus himself, that is, in conjunction with the Kingdom of Heaven/God. Christ first uttered the word 'mystery' (*rāzā*) in Matthew 13:11 to the disciples: "*To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but to them it is not given...*" (see also Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10). Jesus openly declared the mysteries of God's kingdom to the disciples, but to others he spoke in parables concerning this same Kingdom so as to clothe and hide his teaching from his opponents. Thus, in these three occurrences of the word "mystery" (*rāzā*) in the Gospels (i.e. Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10), it refers to an unveiling of the truth or truths of God's Kingdom by Christ exclusively to his disciples.

The more frequent use of the term 'mystery' (*rāzā*) in the New Testament is made by St. Paul. For Paul, 'mystery' (*rāzā*) is first and foremost a "revelation of the plan of Salvation of God the Father, in Jesus Christ." Further, the Gospel itself can be termed a 'mystery' (see Romans 16:25), hidden before the beginning of the worlds. Further, for Paul the resurrection of the faithful departed in Christ is also a 'mystery' (see I Corinthians 15:51), and the "summing up of all things in Christ" (see Ephesians 1:9).[5] Also, for Paul the "mystery" (*rāzā*) usually referred to a hidden truth about God, his Christ or his Kingdom, but as revealed (to some extent) in the Gospel. For Paul, once again, the following notions of "mystery" (*rāzā*) exist:

1. the 'mystery of salvation' revealed to all nations (Romans 16:25; Colossians 1:25-27; Ephesians 3:2ff)
2. the 'mystery of God' (I Corinthians 2:1)
3. the "mystery of the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 2:7; Colossians 1:26; Ephesians 3:8-10)
4. the 'mystery of Christ' (Colossians 2:2)

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[4] Some of the mysteries of God were revealed to the king Nebuchadnezzar and the prophet Daniel.

[5] In technical theological terminology, this is referred to as the 're-capitulation' of all things in Christ (or, in Greek *anakephalaesis*).

5. the 'Mystery of Faith' - *Mysterium Fidei* (Romans 16:25-27; I Timothy 3:9)
6. the 'mystery of the Church' (Ephesians 5:32)
7. the 'mystery of the Gospel' (Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 1:26; 4:3; II Corinthians 4:4-5

We may sum up, therefore, and say that in the New Testament, the understanding of 'mystery' (*rāzā*) can be defined as the hidden/secret will of God the Father and of his Christ, for our salvation and our final perfection unto the glory which was revealed and proclaimed to the whole world, but will be perfected at the end of time, or, the *Parousia*. Therefore, the mystery originates with God the Father, was hidden until it was revealed (in part) in and through the Son for our salvation, and will finally be revealed in its fullness for our final perfection and glorification, though *now* it is only partially revealed (only that which is necessary for our salvation) in the Gospel proclaimed to all peoples.

The Theology of 'Mystery' (*Rāzā*) in Scripture
The way that we can enter into that 'mystery of salvation' noted above, which is given by the Father and completed in Christ, is through the grace of the Father which we receive in the holy Mysteries. It is important to state at the very outset, that the material aspect of all of the sacraments *in and of themselves* and *apart from Christ* do not have any efficaciousness which perfects us spiritually unto salvation. That is to say, the water and oil in the sacrament of Baptism *apart from Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit* do not carry any spiritual power or authority; the Oil of the Chrism of the apostles *apart from Christ and his power* does not have any spiritual importance; the bread and wine of the Eucharist *apart from the Eucharistic action of Christ himself and operation of the Holy Spirit* do not give us the grace of God necessary for salvation. Rather, it is the *materia* (material of the sacrament) in conjunction with the operation of the Holy Spirit that works in and through the sacramental matter, but it is the grace of the Spirit that makes the sacrament efficacious.

In Jesus Christ, the unseen "face of the Father" (cf. John 14:9) has become visible to us by the Lord's taking-on of our human flesh and existence. God the Word, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, by taking on our humanity and becoming truly revealed and demonstrated the humbling of God for the sake of our salvation. The Son took on corporeal, human matter (i.e. our human body) so that by it he would dispense to us God's unseen grace and give us salvation. Thus, we may say even further that Jesus is the "Sacrament of God the Father"!

The theological foundation of the sacraments is indispensable in order to correctly understand and speak about them. Generally, for the Greek-speaking East and the Eastern Orthodox Churches at large the theological foundation of the sacraments lies in the Incarnation. In the mystery of the "Word become flesh"

(see John 1:14), the second person of the Holy Trinity takes unto himself our complete humanity. What this means is that the hidden God has now become uncovered and revealed in the divine person Jesus Christ - true God and true Man. Even as Christ stated to Philip one of the Twelve: "*He who sees me, has seen the Father*" (John 14:9). Christ, "*... in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily*" (Colossians 2:9), has made present in creation through his Incarnation the God who cannot be seen, yet is known through his creations; God is present in creation and among humanity in a way that has never been known and experienced all throughout human history.

However, by way of contrast, for the Assyrian Church of the East the theological basis for the existence of sacraments lies not primarily in the mystery of the Incarnation - which is indeed the beginning of any theology of the sacraments—but in the mystery of Christ's Resurrection! For the Fathers of the Church of the East, the mystery of the Incarnation is the beginning of the divine Economy (*Mdabbrānūthā*), but its fulfillment is found in the mystery of the Resurrection. In Christ's Resurrection, his material, earthly body was transformed into the glorified body (also known as the 'body of the resurrection'); this is the body that we will receive at the general resurrection of the dead when our former existence is transformed into that which Christ had promised us—he who is the 'firstborn' from among the dead. In the Resurrection, the earthly, mortal and human body of corruption is transformed and glorified—mere human flesh is turned into spiritual glory. The body of the Lord which the disciples witnessed in the 10 recorded 'Post-Resurrection' appearances was the glorified body of the Resurrection. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, therefore, there is 'power', for if we participate in his death, we will also glorify in his resurrection. St. Paul proclaimed in this regard: "*So that through his righteousness, I may know Jesus and the power of his resurrection, and be a partaker of his sufferings, even to a death like his, that I may by any means attain the resurrection from the dead*" (Philippians 3:10). To sum up, in the mystery of the Incarnation the Godhead took on humanity, and thus declared it 'salvageable' (i.e. not beyond hope of salvation). However, in the mystery of the Lord Jesus' Resurrection humanity was lifted up to the highest heights - even to the sitting at the right hand of the Father in glory with the Lord's ascension into heaven - and was given a transformed, glorified existence. Mere corporeal, fleshly matter now becomes glorified and transformed in Jesus' bodily resurrection from among the dead!

After giving the major theological foundation of the sacraments - that is, the mystery of the Resurrection - let us now move on to looking at how the 'sacraments' existed in the Scriptures. Of course, we use the term "sacrament" at this point by theologically reflecting on the Scriptures (here, the Old Testament in particular).

In the Old Testament Economy or dispensation (*Mdabbrānūthā*), we may count two major 'sacraments' observed by the Israelites. What these 'sacraments' did—as outward signs of God's inner grace and will—was to allow the Israelite as a member of the covenant with God to participate in events of salvation which God had prepared. First, let us look at circumcision. This was the commandment of God to Abraham:

> When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "I am the Almighty God; walk well before me, and faultless. And I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly." And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying: "As for me, behold, I am establishing my covenant with you, and you shall be a father of many peoples. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many peoples. And I will make you fruitful, and multiply you exceedingly; and I will make you father of many nations, and kings shall come out of your loins. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, and I will be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and your descendants after you, the land in which you sojourn, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting inheritance; and I will be their God."
>
> And God said to Abraham, "You shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, who is not of your descendants. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your money, shall be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; for he has broken my covenant…And Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin (Exodus 17:1-14, 24).

With the establishment of the everlasting covenant between God and Abraham—and Abraham's descendants for that matter—the Lord commanded Abraham to circumcise himself, as well as his son and all of his male servants, etc. Further, the new-born child was to be circumcised on the eighth day of his birth as an outward sign of the inner covenant between God and Abraham. Later, the circumcision of every male child in Israel on the eighth day was stipulated under the Law: "*And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*" (Leviticus 12:3).

In the dispensation of the Lord in the New Testament, on the other hand, the baptism of water replaces the circumcision observed by the Israelites. In fact,

St. Paul refers to this baptism as "*the circumcision of Christ*" and the "*circumcision which is not made with hands*" (Colossians 2:11). The outward act and sign of circumcision, therefore, constituted one to be an heir in the everlasting covenant between God and Abraham, and whoever was not circumcised was to be "*cut off from the people of Israel.*" Those, however, who did circumcise would be blessed by God by enjoying the blessings of the covenant, which was an everlasting one that the descendants of Abraham would enjoy as well.

The other major theological event in the Old Testament which acts as a forerunner and Old Testament basis for our New Testament, Christian understanding of the sacraments is the observance of the Passover feast. It was the major event of salvation under the Old Testament Economy (*Mdabbrānūthā*) for the Israelites, which would later be reinterpreted and 're-theologized' by the Lord Jesus himself under the New Testament dispensation.

The Passover celebration was not just another feast for the Israelites, rather, it was a mighty demonstration of God's saving power (in light of the economy of salvation for all peoples) that freed the People of Israel from servitude and enslavement to the Egyptians for 430 years. Under Moses, the 'Firstborn of the Prophets', the Lord God led the people of Israel out of Egypt, and gradually into the land of Canaan (called by the Old Testament Scriptures the 'Promised Land'). According to the ordinance of the Lord recorded in Exodus 12, the Israelites were to take a male lamb, one year old and without blemish, on the 10th day of the month of Nissan. They were to keep it until the 14th day, at which point the whole congregation of Israel was to gather and slay the lamb and roast it whole; the blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on the two door posts, the lintel and the house in which the lamb would be eaten. All of this was to take place in hast:

> And thus you shall eat it; with your lions girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste; for it is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and all the firstborn of the land of Egypt shall die, both man and beast; and against all the idols of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a sign upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will make you glad, and the plague shall not be among you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be to you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord, a festival throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever (Exodus 12:11-14).

The following seven days after the observance of the Passover on the 14th of Nissan (referred to as the 'first month') were to be the days of 'Unleavened Bread'.

The feast of the Passover was not simply one of the three major feasts of the Israelites (i.e. those that had to be celebrated in Jerusalem - Passover along with Yom Kippur and the Feast of Tabernacles), for the Passover feast was the most important. The reason was this: this feast celebrated the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, and it initiated the process of the entrance into the Promised Land; it was the feast celebrating the salvation of the Jews from bondage, slavery and death at the hands of the Egyptians—made possible through a marvelous intervention by God himself!

The sacramental character of the feast, therefore, is seen in that the participation of the Israelites in the eating of the flesh of the Passover lamb and the unleavened bread was a true and real participation in the salvific event of the Exodus, brought about through the intervention of God himself. How would, therefore, the many generations of Jews participate, first as seen above, in the covenant with Abraham almost 1,850 years before Christ, and in the salvation of the People by God in the Exodus event, almost 1,450 years before Christ? In the former, by observing circumcision each Hebrew would participate in the mystery of the Covenant of the Lord with Abraham; in the latter, by eating of the Passover lamb the generations of Israelites would be truly participating in the salvific event of the Exodus from Egypt. Therefore, both circumcision and the participation in the eating of the Passover would make each Israelite truly and really participate in that mystery depicted in both, namely, in the Covenant and in the salvific event of Exodus!

The Ecclesial Understanding of the Sacraments and their Septenary Number

The sacraments, as defined by Mar Abdisho of Nisibis (d. 1318 AD), one of the last major theologians of the Assyrian Church of the East who first defined the seven sacraments, in his "Book of the Pearl" (*Margānīthā*), are the following: 1) priesthood 2) baptism 3) Oil of the Apostles 4) Eucharist 5) absolution 6) Holy Leaven (Syr. *Malka*) 7) sign of the living Cross. This order of the sacraments, beginning with the priesthood, indicates the *existential* order of their institution, for without the apostolic and sacramental priesthood there could be no other sacraments. Before this time (i.e. ca. 1318 AD), the Fathers of the Church of the East had not defined or limited the sacraments to the number seven.[6] Later, Patriarch Mar Timothy II (1318-1352?) adds a different list of the sacraments in his theological work *The Book of the Seven Causes of the Eccle-*

6 In the Latin Church, the seven sacraments were only formally declared at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, and later re-affirmed in the Council of Trent held in the mid-sixteenth century. The Eastern Orthodox adopted the number seven (seemingly under the Roman Catholic influence) only in the seventeenth century; see CONIARIS 1981, 9.

siastical Mysteries.[7] Formally, many other acts were considered to be 'sacraments' at one time or another, but the number seven became universally popular since the Scriptural septenary number seven denotes perfection and wholeness.[8]

There are three basic influences on the Church of the East's adoption of the septenary system for counting the sacraments. First, it seems to be the case that the treatises of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Celestial Hierarchy* and *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, had entered the sacramental theology of the Church of the East, likely via the West Syrian maphrian of Tagrit, Gegorius Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286).[9] Presumably, the Church of the East polymath Mar Abdisho of Nisibis (d. 1318) would have been familiar with the works of Bar Hebraeus, particularly his *Candelabrum Sanctuarii*, which discusses the sacraments. This influence is especially seen in the work on the sacraments of Mar Timothy II, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East and a younger contemporary of Abdisho, titled *The Seven Causes of the Sacraments of the Church*.[10]

The second influence for enumerating the sacraments is generally traced back to the Latin influence exerted over rather much of the Christian East during the Second Council of Lyons (1272-1274). During this Western council's fourth session, an *ad hoc* union was forged between the Latin and Greek Churches - the Greek position being forced by the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Pale-

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7 This work exists in manuscript form only, though three chapters of it have been translated and/or edited in English. First, his chapter on baptism see KADICHEENI, *The Mystery of Baptism: The Text and Translation of the Chapter 'On the Holy Baptism' from 'The Causes of the Seven Mysteries of the Church' of Timothy II, Nestorian Patriarch (1318-1332*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (Rome, 1972); on the Eucharist see KOCHUPARAMPIL 2000, *The Mystery of Christ. Syriac Critical Text, Translation and Studies of the Chapter 'On the Mysteries of the Body and Blood' from 'The Book of the Seven Causes of the Mysteries of the Church' by Catholicos-Patriarch Timothy II (1318-1332)*, Doctoral Dissertation at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome (Rome, 2000); and on the Consecration of the Altar see TOMA 2007, *The Mystery of the Church. Syriac Critical Edition and Translation of the Rite of the Consecration of the Altar with Oil and the Chapter 'On the Consecration of the Church' from the 'Book of the Seven Causes of the Mysteries of the Church' by Patriarch Timothy II (1318-1332)*, Doctoral Dissertation at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome. The Patriarch Mar Timothy II numbers the following sacraments: 1) Priesthood 2) Consecration of the Altar 3) Baptism 4) Eucharist 5) Perfection (*Shumlaya*) of Monks 6) Perfection (*Shumlaya*) of the Faithful Departed 7) Marriage and its Perfection (*Shumlaya*); the sacrament of Absolution (*Khusaya*) is added as an appendix to this treatise. However, in its Holy Synod convocation of 2001, the Assyrian Church of the East officially adopted the seven sacraments as listed by Mar Abdisho of Nisibis.

8 For example, the early 12th century master of Yokhanna bar Zo'bi, the monk Šem'ön of Šenqaläbäd (modern-day Šeqläwä), enumerates some twelve sacraments, among them the Cross and Gospel. For his biography, see BAUMSTARK 1922, 310.

9 For a recent critical edition of these two important texts of Pseudo-Dionysius, see: HEIL-RITTER (eds.) 1990.

10 Cf. DE VRIES 1947, 49-50 (footnote 1), 55. For the Syriac text of the *Candelabrum*, see Vatican Syriac Manuscript 186.

ologos. It was the *confessio fidei* of the emperor submitted to Pope Gregory X during the fourth session of the council that contained an enumeration of the seven sacraments, held in common by the Geek and Latin Churches. The Byzantine emperor declared:

> The same Holy Roman Church also holds and teaches that there are seven sacraments of the Church: one is baptism, which has been mentioned above; another is the sacrament of confirmation which bishops confer by the laying on of hands while they anoint the reborn; then penance, the Eucharist, the sacrament of order, matrimony and extreme unction which, according to the doctrine of the Blessed James, [James 5:14-15] is administered to the sick. The same Roman Church performs [*conficit*] the sacrament of the Eucharist with unleavened bread; she holds and teaches that in this sacrament the bread is truly transubstantiated into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the wine into His blood. As regards matrimony, she holds that neither is a man allowed to have several wives at the same time nor a woman several husbands. But, when a legitimate marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the spouses, she declares that a second and afterwards a third wedding are successively licit, if no other canonical impediment goes against it for any reason.[11]

However, the theologians and hierarchs of the Church of the East would have somehow heard of the Latin list of sacraments as found in the confession of faith of Emperor Michael VIII through the Latin missionaries (particularly those of the Dominican order) who had already reached Baghdad and were preaching in the "Nestorian" churches of the city during the Fourth Crusade. In fact, almost a decade before Mar Abdisho, the famed vicar of Mar Yahballaha III (patriarch 1281-1317) Rabban Bar Sawma (ca. 1220-1294) travelled the major kingdoms of western Europe in order to muster support for the Mongol Arghun Khan by creating a Mongol-European alliance in order to secure control of the Holy Land from the Muslims. While in Europe, Rabban Bar Sawma had visited the major Christian shrines, and while in Rome he had conversed with the cardinals of his day concerning matters theological, particularly the liturgy and sacraments.[12] Slightly later, Mar Abdisho of Nisibis himself would have been

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[11] DENZINGER-SCHÖNMETZER 1997, 860. These same seven sacraments would be officially recognized in 1439, at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. At this council, in the *Decree for the Armenians*, the seven sacraments were again treated in the bull of Pope Eugene IV, *Exsultate Domine* of 1439: "We have drawn up in the briefest form a statement of the truth concerning the seven sacraments, so that the Armenians, now and in future generations, may more easily be instructed therein. There are seven sacraments under the new law: that is to say, baptism, confirmation, the mass, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony. These differ essentially from the sacraments of the old law; for the latter do not confer grace, but only typify that grace which can be given by the passion of Christ alone. But these our sacraments both contain grace and confer it upon all who receive them worthily." see DENZINGER-SCHÖNMETZER 1997, 1310.

[12] For the English text of the history of Rabban Bar Sawma (and the monk Markos - later Mar Yahballaha III) see: J. MONTGOMERY 1927. Cf. BUDGE 1928.

privy to these confessions of faith, translated into Arabic by the missionaries, during his own lifetime. Further, we know that ambassadors of the Ilkhan Abaqa Khan were present at the Council of Lyons in 1274, and they too would have been another important source for bringing back the list of seven sacraments to the Church of the East, particularly under Mar Yahballaha III who was residing at Maraga, in Persia.[13]

The Efficaciousness of the Sacraments

In order for the sacraments to be spiritually efficacious for sinners who are in need of God's grace, they must be valid; this means that the Church recognizes the Mysteries as true and genuine liturgical and sacramental acts, through which God acts. Mar Abdisho of Nisibis gives the criteria for the validity of sacraments in Part IV, Chapter I of his *Margānīthā*; they are:

1. "A true priest who has rightly attained the priesthood according to the requirements of the Church." This means that only one who is validly ordained into the priestly ministry of the Church, according to the canons, may attempt to administer the sacraments. For this reason, Mar Abdisho numbers the priesthood as the first sacrament, for without it there can be no other sacrament.
2. 'The *word* and command of the Lord of the sacraments.' The foundation of the sacrament is the commanding and authoritative word of Jesus Christ, he who himself is the Incarnate Word of the Father. Through his command, the sacraments are established and made efficacious, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. In essence, it is Christ who has established the sacraments. St. Paul refers to this when he says to the Corinthian Church that he has "*...received from the Lord that which I have handed down to you*" (I Corinthians 11:23).
3. "The right intention and confirmed faith on the part of the recipient of the sacrament, believing that the effect of the sacraments takes place by a heavenly power." Finally and ultimately, the reason for the sacraments is to edify the baptized faithful, to strengthen their faith and to sanctify them with God's grace. If one were not to believe this, what benefit would he or she reap from the sacraments? That would not make the sacraments inefficacious *in se*, rather the sinner would not reap spiritual benefit from it. For the sacraments to work in our lives, sanctifying and edifying us with God's grace, we need to believe that! If we doubt God's power, or that he works through the sacraments to give us his grace, then they become of no avail *to us*.

[13] Michael VIII's illegitimate daughter Maria Palaiologina was married to Abaqa Ilkhan of Persia. This relationship might have also served as a vehicle for disseminating the *confession fidei* of Michael given at Lyons to the Church in the Persian-Mongolian territory.

There are two constitutive aspects of each and every sacrament: 1) the outward material known as the "matter" (in Latin, *materia*) of the sacrament; and 2) the inner grace of the Holy Spirit which is expressed in the formula particular to that sacrament; this is known as the 'form' (the Latin *forma*). This is undoubtedly the influence of the hylomorphic system of the philosopher Aristotle, which philosophical language the Church of the East has adopted in regards the sacraments as well. In our faith, it is the inner power of the Spirit working through the material element of the sacraments that effects the grace of God being present for our sanctification and edification, as St. John Chrysostom states (with regard to baptism): "The eyes of the flesh see the flesh being washed; the eyes of the spirit see the soul being cleansed." In the *Margānīthā*, Mar Abdisho also speaks of the sacraments (in Part IV) as to their matter (*mlō'aā*) and form (*'adhšā*).

Mar Abdisho defines a sacrament (or *rāzā*) as being spiritual remedies for our sinfulness. He uses the paradigm of a man being born, nurtured and growing in this world; as it were, it is a sort of organic analogy the sacraments. Thus, the sacrament of Baptism is a 'spiritual (re)birth'; the Chrismation is a 'perfecting in the Holy Spirit'; the Eucharist is a 'spiritual nourishment' for the man after his birth according to the Spirit; the sacrament of Absolution is a "spiritual healing" or medicine for the one afflicted with sin:

> Again, as every one who is in the body, through changes of the times, and bad conditions, is subject to sickness and disease, and is in need of physicians who will restore him to his former health if he follows their injunctions; so the man of God, through the effects of sin, and immoral living, falls into the disorders of iniquity, and receives health from the priests of the Church, the spiritual physicians, if he orders himself after their directions (*Margānīthā*, Part IV, Chapter I).

Undoubtedly, Mar Abdisho has in the background of this statement a well-known antiphon in the *Khūdrā*: "Our Lord has given the medicine of repentance to the skilled physicians, who are the priests of the Church. And the one whom Satan has stricken with the affliction of iniquity, let him come and show his sores to the disciples of the Wise Physician and they shall heal him with spiritual medicine." The paradigm that Abdisho is using is that the Christian (i.e. 'man of God') is stricken with a spiritual illness of iniquity called sin, and can only be healed by having recourse to the divine Physician who dispenses his medicines in the Holy Church - and these medicines are the sacraments.

There are three ways in which the sacraments have been established and instituted in the Holy Church:

1. those sacraments established by Christ himself and as recorded in Sacred Scripture (i.e. Eucharist, Baptism, Priesthood, Absolution);

2. those sacraments established by the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Holy Leaven or *Malka*, the oil of the Apostles or *Qarna* - the holy Horn);
3. those sacraments established by the Church, by virtue of its apostolic authority in conjunction with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Holy Cross and the nine-fold divisions of the priesthood).[14]

As such, the Church of the East does not have the formal distinction of 'sacramentals', as in the Latin West (such as holy water, etc.), for those rites which are not of the septenary number of the sacraments but in some fashion share in their sacred nature.

The sacraments, being instituted by Christ, handed down by the apostles and observed/nurtured in the holy Church, are acts that pertain to the very nature and mission of the Church itself. Being the Body of Christ and the holy gathering of the baptized faithful, the sacraments edify and sanctify the members of that Body. Therefore, the place (*locus*) of the celebration of the holy sacraments is the Church itself; for this reason we refer to them as the *Rāze d-Edta* ('the Mysteries *of the Church*') - for they belong to and in the Church of Christ.

The sacraments are aimed at sanctifying the Christian in the various stages of his/her earthly life. We may call this the *organic* analogy of the sacraments. By 'organic' we mean that we look at man who undergoes various changes (or mutations) in his or her life, from birth to natural death. As an organism, the human body undergoes diverse changes at various stages of life; this is just how God has created us! Similarly, we need to be accompanied during these various stages with God's saving grace, so that we may be sanctified throughout our life unto salvation. The sacraments make present in our daily life the Kingdom of God by continuing the salvific ministry of Christ (particularly fulfilled in the *Mysterium Paschale*), which also included his sacred doctrine and the healing of mankind, even as the signs which Christ performed and as recorded in the Gospels were demonstrations of the might of God and of the divinity of Christ (especially in the Gospel of John - the *semeia*) and witnesses to the saving words of Jesus the Savior of men.

The Patristic Understanding of 'Mystery' (*Rāzā*)

It is important to understand the nature and content of the sacraments as the fathers and teachers of the Church of the East taught and understood them; our "Theology of the Sacraments" is solely and entirely based on theirs! The most important patristic writer of the Assyrian Church of the East who profusely

[14] Based on this third category, Mar Timothy II considered other liturgical acts as being 'sacramental' in nature, particularly: monastic tonsure, marriage, consecration of altars, burial rite of the faithful depart.

makes use of sacramental language and the sacraments in general is Mar Aprem the Great (St. Ephrem), who lived from 306 to 373 AD. St. Ephrem differentiates between the usages of 'type', 'symbol' and '*rāzā*'. Let us look at each in some detail.

Ephrem develops an in-depth understanding of the universe and all things that are contained therein, and its relation to the Creator and his divine revelation by the use of the term *rāzā*. For St. Ephrem, Christ is at the center of the cosmos and of God's revelation itself, in particular and most importantly in the Scriptures. His understanding of the universe and its spiritual symbolism, therefore, is 'Christocentric' (Christ is at the center) and thus 'Christological' (it has to do with Christ). To put it simply, all things in creation point to Jesus Christ and some aspect of his revelation in the flesh. Therefore, everything that is found in nature (and really, the whole cosmos) and in the Scriptures is "emblematic" of Christ. If we stretch the significance of these 'mysteries' in creation and Scripture, they are also euphemisms for the sacraments (the 'mysteries' of initiation into the revelation of Jesus Christ). The symbolism found in the universe, therefore, is three-dimensional in that it pertains to: 1) the cosmos/creation; 2) the Scriptures; 3) the mysteries or sacraments.

This sacramental understanding of St. Ephrem is at the core and indeed the foundation of his exegetical hermeneutics as well. He looks at the text of Sacred Scripture (that which is interpreted literally, or rather the "rhetorical" aspect of the sacred text), and this he refers to as *sūrānāīth* (ܨܘܪܢܐܝܬ), or the figurative language. However, beyond the text there is a spiritual understanding which points to the ultimate mystery of Christ himself (which he terms ܪܘܚܢܐܝܬ *rūkhānāīth*). This comes from the basic understanding of the physical and spiritual aspects of creation.

In English, quite often in our modern age, the word *rāzā* would be equated with 'symbol'. However, this does not convey the real meaning of *rāzā*. The correct co-relative word for 'symbol' would be *remzā*. Symbol is also generally used by the fathers (such as Gabriel of Qatar and Abraham bar Lipeh of Qatar in the mid seventh and early eighth centuries respectively) to denote a thing or action which points to some other reality, but does not necessarily have a concealed meaning behind it. Further, the relationship between the symbol and the reality which it symbolizes may not necessarily be a rather tight one. For example, street signs and traffic signs which we all observe (or should, at least!) on a daily basis are symbols (or, 'signs' if you will) that point to a reality beyond the actual symbol - for example, they point to the authority of the state to regulate the safe and orderly flow of traffic for the safety of its citizens. Therefore, following the theological understanding of St. Ephrem, it is best to refer to them as 'mysteries' rather than 'symbols'. For Ephrem, the entire cosmos/universe

would be full of symbols and signs that point to a higher theological reality than the mere symbol can contain.[15]

Another important term that helps us to understand the sacraments (which is often made use of by the fathers of the Church of the East) is *type*. Type or *Tupsā* (from the Greek, *tūpos*), is an action or thing that looks to a reality older than itself as its foundation/origin. This technical term is particularly important when reading the Sacred Scriptures. In great part, those theological realities in the Old Testament, which are "figures" of those found in the New are similitudes which are called *typology*. The use of typology was widely used at first by the apostles in order to explain that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament. St. Paul says in I Corinthians 10:11 that, "*...all these things happened to them as a type, and they were written for our correction.*" According to Paul, this was given for our disciplining and for the 'consolation of the Scriptures': "*For all that which was written of old, was written for our knowledge, that by the forbearance and consolation of the Scriptures we might gain hope*" (Romans 15:4).[16]

Because the Church on earth (up until the *eschaton*, or end of times) is the extension of the ministry and presence of Christ in the world, the Christological typology of the Old Testament is not only valid for the person of Christ (primarily), but for the Church as well, by way of extension. Now, we enter the realm of *sacramental typology*. For example, we could say that the Last Supper is a *type* for the Holy Qurbana; the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan is a *type* of our own baptism; the Tree of Life is a *type* of the Holy Cross, etc. In the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, for example, the actions of the liturgy *typify* some other Christocentric reality that directly deals with the dispensation of Christ and his mystery. As an example, and in reference to the procession of the Holy Gifts to the altar by the priests and deacons, Mar Abraham bar Lipeh explains: "The Church depicts a type at this time in which she *typifies* the mystery of the Crucifixion of Jesus upon the Wood..." However, differently from *symbol*, the *type* may indeed participate in the "mystery" (*rāzā*) to which it points and/or which it depicts in the liturgy (sacramental celebration) of the Church.

After Ephrem, Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428 AD) is by far the most important theologian of the Church of the East (especially foundational for the School of Nisibis and her major theologians), particularly for our understanding of the sacraments. First, Mar Theodore posits the basic premise of the 'Two Worlds;' this is essential for his theology of the sacraments. Theodore explains:

> According to that which the blessed Moses learned in the divine vision, he constructed two tabernacles, one which he called the 'holy place' and the other the

[15] For a more in-depth study of symbolism and typology in St. Ephrem, see BUCK 1999, 85-96.
[16] See DANIELOU 1956, 4-5.

> 'Holy of Holies.' The first one was a type of life and the dwelling which we now live on earth, and the second one which they called the 'Holy of Holies' was a similitude of those regions which are above the visible heavens, that to which our Lord ascended and in which he remains and gave us to go there and dwell there with him.

In explaining the nature of 'mystery' (*raza*), Theodore defines the sacrament thus:

> Every sacrament is the likeness of things that are not visible and unspeakable, through signs and symbols. Such things require interpretation and enlightening on account of the person who draws near to these mysteries so that he may know their power. But if they were only composed of visible matter, words for their interpretation would be for naught, for sight itself would be sufficient to show us, one by one, all the actions taken place. Therefore, words are necessary to interpret the power of the symbols and mysteries.

According to Theodore, therefore, the outward matter of the sacrament (e.g. bread, wine, oil, water) symbolizes the hidden and unspeakable power concealed in and underlying the sacrament. This hidden power ultimately derives from the Lord Jesus' death, burial and Resurrection (i.e. the 'Paschal Mystery').

Because the sacraments are 'pledges' of everlasting life and the blessedness in eternity which is to come in the future, according to Theodore's sacramental theology we still gain spiritual benefit from the sacraments while in this world, and yet also a 'foretaste' of the next world; we have not attained to the fullness of that everlasting life yet, though. He continues:

> Paul demonstrates to us that when our Lord comes from heaven and openly shows the world which is to come and fulfills our resurrection from among the dead - through which we shall become immortal in our body and immutable in our spirit - the use of the mysteries and symbols shall necessarily cease, for we shall be in the truth of that reality itself and will not be in need of visible symbols that remind us concerning the things which shall take place.

The importance, then, and use of the sacraments in this world is to remind us and to make us participate in the reality of the world which is to come. Theodore puts this future realization of the gifts and benefits of the sacraments in this manner:

> It behooves you now to make use of an intelligence consonant with these sublime things of which you have been rendered worthy, and to think well, according to the measure of the greatness of a gift such as this, what we were and into what we have been transformed: that we were mortal by nature and we expect to receive immortality, that from being corruptible we shall become incorruptible, from passable impassible, from mutable, forever immutable; and that we shall be transferred from the evils of the earth to heaven; and that we shall enjoy all the

> good and delightful things found in heaven. We have acquired this hope from the economy of Christ our Lord…

Elsewhere he states to the same effect: We are commanded to perform in this world the symbols and signs of things which are to be, so that by the use of the mysteries we may become as people who symbolically participate in the joy and blessedness of heaven, and thus attain affinity and great hope of the things to which we look.

The other important theologian of the Assyrian Church of the East who writes extensively on the sacraments of the Church is Mar Narsai of Nisibis (ca. 399-502). He was the great 'Master' (*Rabban*) at the School of Nisibis, which he helped found in 457 AD, after the expulsion of Ibas of Edessa. He later flourished during the episcopal tenure of Mar Bar Sawma of Nisibis. He is famous for his poetic exegetical and liturgical works, mostly commentaries on the Scriptures, general theology and on liturgical matters.[17] His important liturgical works are Homily XVII (*An Exposition of the Mysteries*), Homily XXI (*On the Mysteries of the Church and on Baptism*) and Homily XXXII (*On the Church and on Priesthood*).

Narsai depends heavily upon Theodore of Mopsuestia for the formulation of his own theology, and with regard to the sacraments he adopts Theodore's concept of the 'Two Worlds' (i.e. the heavenly and the earthly realms), and that the earthly ministry is a mirror of the liturgy celebrated in heaven; he states that the priests in the earthly sanctuary depict that dwelling place (heaven) as by means of a mystery, and as a mirror they show the likeness of those things which are to come.

Another important concept for Narsai's liturgical theology is that the priest, as the minister of the 'Mysteries of the Church' is a vessel utilized by the Holy Spirit, who really is the ultimate 'Celebrant' of and the one who perfects these mysteries: By the power of the will of his (the Holy Spirit's) will the priest distributes life in the Bread, and he drives away iniquity and makes for the Spirit to dwell among the members (of the Body). The power of the Spirit descends upon the mortal man and dwells in the Bread and sanctifies it by the might of his power.

Regarding the signs and symbols of the sacrament, Narsai states (e.g. with regard to the sacrament of Baptism) that the oil is the symbol which proclaims the divine power, and by outward things (God) gives the assurance of his works

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[17] For an English introduction to the general history and works of Narsai see Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII 1970, iii-lii. For an introduction to Narsai's liturgical commentaries see CONNOLLY 1909, ix-lxxv; for an in-depth study of Narsai's liturgical theology, see: Edmund Bishop, "Observations on the Liturgy of Narsai," in CONNOLLY 1909, 85-163.

completed in secret. He further teaches that it is not the matter (Latin *materia*) of the particular sacrament which sanctifies man, but the power of the Spirit which is hidden in it: This is the power which the oil (of baptism) imparts - not the oil, but the Spirit who gives it power. The Spirit gives power to the weak oil, and he strengthens by the operation which he works in it. Narsai further states that priest invokes the Holy Spirit to descend and hover over the Offering (Eucharist) and to impart to it divine power through the Spirit's operation.

By way of summary, the Assyrian Church of the East follows the Antiochene understanding of the role of the sacraments in salvation, departing God's grace to the baptized faithful and their role as 'pledges' (*rahbōnā*) of the Kingdom of Heaven, the benefit the full merits of which will be realized at the *eschaton.* I will conclude with the words of the 'Great Expositor of the Divine Scriptures', Mar Theodore, as he comments on the sacrament of baptism:

> While still on earth we have been inscribed in the awe-inspiring glory of the future world through these mysteries, but we (ought to) live as much as possible a heavenly life in spurning visible things and aspiring after future things. Those who are about to partake now of these awe-inspiring mysteries are inspired to do so by the grace of God. They do not do this in order to partake of small and ordinary gifts, but to be transformed completely into new men and to possess different virtues which they will receive by the gift of the grace of God: being mortal they will become immortal, being corruptible they will become incorruptible, being passible they will become impassible, being changeable they will become unchangeable, being bond they will become free, being enemies they will become friends, being strangers they will become sons. They will no more be considered a part of Adam but of Christ; they will call as their head not Adam but Christ, who has renewed them; they will not cultivate a ground that will bring forth thorns and thistles to them [Genesis 3:18ff], but they will dwell in a heaven which is remote and immune from all sorrow and sighing [cf. Isaiah 35:10]; nor will death rule over them but they will become themselves rulers in a new life where they will not be slaves of sin but warriors of righteousness, not servants of Satan but intimate friends of Christ for all time.[18]

[18] For Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, see MINGANA 1932, 20.

Comparative Table of the Sacraments Among the Various Apostolic Churches

Assyrian Church of the East	Eastern Orthodox Churches[19]	Roman Catholic Church	Oriental Orthodox Churches[20]
Priesthood	Baptism	Baptism	Baptism
Baptism	Confirmation	Confirmation	Confirmation
Oil of the Apostles	Eucharist	Eucharist	Repentance & Confession
Eucharist	Penance	Penance	Eucharist
Absolution	Anointing of the Sick	Anointing of the Sick	Unction of the Sick
Holy Leaven (Malka)	Holy Orders	Holy Orders	Matrimony
Holy Cross	Matrimony	Matrimony	Priesthood

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[19] The Eastern Orthodox Churches will also speak of the consecration of churches (altars), the monastic tonsure, Christian burial and holy water as "sacraments" as well. These Churches include the Greek Orthodox Church (Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), the Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Churches, Orthodox Church of Cyprus and the Orthodox Church of Greece (Archbishop of Athens).

[20] These include the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Malankara Orthodox Churches (both Catholicates).

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THEOLOGICAL TRANSFER: HOW DID MONKS FROM CHINA INFLUENCE EAST SYRIAC SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY?

Dietmar W. WINKLER
University of Salzburg, Austria

The Church of the East counts seven Sacraments, which – like in the Western Catholic tradition – has not always been the case. Only in the Middle Ages, the number seven was developed by Western scholastic theologians. That a Church with a unique and specific own ecclesial tradition, which expanded especially from Persia to Central Asia and China, also counts "seven sacraments", is not only strange, but strongly suggests theological exchange and encounter between the East Syriac and the Latin Churches.

Therefore, the question of this paper is: How did the number enter the theology of the Church of the East? In the following, we will follow some traces and develop a hypothesis of intercultural theological exchange.

1. Sacramentum – Mysterium – Raza

In ecumenical dialogues between various Christian churches and denominations such as (byzantine) Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and Catholic, the subject of sacraments is an issue, because there are different approaches to understand them. Here is not the place to present historical theology in length, but we might at least mention that the problem specially and only came up in the Western Church. It has become a sometimes even heated discussion since the times of the Reformation in the 16th century. In any case, Christian Churches understand sacraments differently. In general it might be said that a sacrament is a sacred rite. Visible is the performative and celebrated act, invisible is the acting of God's grace. In the 1980s, a quite large ecumenical project on sacraments was undertaken by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches involving about 120 Christian Churches. This ended up in a common document, the so-called "Lima-Document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM). Afterward Churches were officially requested to respond to that document. And it was interesting to read the answer of the Assyrian Church of the East, signed by Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV († 2015), which starts with the following sentence:

> The sacraments of the Church, according to the divine scriptures, are seven in number: the priesthood, which is ministry of all the other sacraments; holy baptism, the oil of unction, the oblation of the body and blood of Christ; absolution; the holy leaven, namely, the king (Malka); the sign of the life-giving cross.[1]

This is a direct quote of the English translation of ʿAbdishō bar Brikā's *Book of the Pearl (Margarītā)*, even more, the whole answer of Mar Dinkha to the BEM-Document is taken from ʿAbdishō, using the English text provided by George Percy Badger in the second volume of his *The Nestorians and their Rituals*.[2] By that also ʿAbdishō's list of sacraments got officially adopted by the Assyrian Church of the East. This has not been done in any official document before.

What is interesting in ʿAbdishō's text – at least in its English translation – is at first sight the term "sacrament" and the number "seven". The term "sacrament" only became relevant in the theology of the Latin Middle Ages. The Eastern Churches of Greek tradition have been using the term *mysterion* (μυστήριον). Actually the Latin word *sacramentum* has a more juridical tone and derives from the oath soldiers had to take.[3] With typically scholastic meticulousness, the technical term *sacramentum* tries to define exactly how and when God's Grace takes effect. However, this does not quite fit for the Greek *mysterion*, which would have a wider context and connotation. *Mysterion* is a term to express in a more holistic way the incomprehensibility of God's acting grace in the world. In that sense, since God's grace might not be limited, there could be countless "sacraments". Because of political interrelations and theological disputes between the Latin and the Greek Churches in the Middle Ages, especially from the 9th century onwards up to the times of the Council of Lyons (1274), Greek theologians used *mysterion* as a synonym of *sacramentum*, but – at the same time – questioned the limitations of the Latin term. In short: *sacrament* and *mysterion*, although often used as synonyms, are not entirely congruent.

The Syriac original of ʿAbdishō's text actually starts with the term *raze* (ܪ̈ܐܙܐ), which got translated in the 18th century into Latin by Assemani as *sacramenta*:

> ܪ̈ܐܙܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܫܒܥܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܪܥܝܢ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ. ܩܕܡܝܐ ܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܕܗܝ ܗܝ
> ܡܫܡܠܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܪ̈ܐܙܐ. ܒ. ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ. ܓ. ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ. ܕ.
> ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܦܓܪܗ ܘܕܡܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܗ. ܫܘܒܩܢܐ ܕܚܛܗ̈ܐ. ܘ. ܚܡܝܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܙ. ܪܘܫܡܐ
> ܕܨܠܝܒܐ ܡܚܝܢܐ.
>
> Sacramenta [*raze*] ecclesiae septem sunt juxta mentem divinarum scriptuarum. Primum est sacerdotium, quod perficit omnia sacramenta; secundum sanctum

[1] Thurian 1987,26.
[2] Cf. Badger 1852, 404.
[3] Cf. Finkenzeller 1980, 24-62.

> baptisma; tertium oleum unctionis; quartum oblatio corporis et sanguinis Christi; quintum remissio peccatorum; sextum sacrum fermentum; septimum signum vivificae crucis.[4]

Raza is much closer to the Greek meaning than to the Latin understanding. It indicates mystery, secret, symbol, and sign. Furthermore, *raza* (ܐܪܙܐ) in singular is very rarely used, while the plural *raze* has a wider meaning. For example the consecrated elements bread and wine, the so-called Eucharistic gifts for the *Qurbana* (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ), i.e. the divine mysteries, are called *raze*.[5] East Syriac theology speaks of *raze* whenever they might identify God's saving work through the power of the Holy Spirit. In that sense, the list of *raze* could be almost unlimited. And if East Syriac theologians prefer to talk about some favored ones, this has not to be understood in an exclusive way.[6] For the Syriac tradition it might be better to leave the term un-translated in modern languages. If Western Christians can talk about *sacramentum* (sacraments), and the Greek Orthodox tradition about *mysterion* (mystery), the Syriac tradition simply should use *raza*.

2. Latin and East Syriac Sacramental Theology in the Middle Ages

2.a. Latin: Scholastic Theology and the Council of Lyons (1274)

The number "seven" for the sacraments was constrncted by scholastic Latin theologians to describe the perfection of God's saving work. Before the 12th century quite different enumerations existed. One may mention Petrus Damiani († 1072), who counts twelve, while Hugo of St. Victor († 1142) enumerates thirty, and Bernard of Clairvaux († 1153) lists eleven.[7]

However, for scholastic theologians "seven" became attractive. Petrus Lombardus († 1160) seems to be the first one who asserted a list of seven sacraments.[8] Seven is a symbolic figure signifying completeness and by that the holistic way of God's acting grace. Considering this theological viewpoint, it is a secondary question which sacraments are counted, as long as there are seven. And, in fact, we have quite different lists up to the 13th century identifying different rites as sacraments.

In the 13th century, in specific political circumstances of the European Middle Ages and the Byzantine Empire, negotiations started between the Greek Church of Constantinople and the Latin Church of Rome. Since this is not the place to analyze the Council of Lyons, the main points should be mentioned only in

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4 Assemani 1725, 356; Assemani 1728,240.

5 Cf. Madey/Vavanikunnel 1993, Einführung.

6 Cf. Dalmais 1989, 144.

7 Cf. Finkenzeller 1980, 72-74.

8 Cf. Ibid. 119-125.

short:[9] After the death of Pope Clement IV (1268) almost three years passed before the cardinals were able to elect a new pope, Gregory X (1271). The political situation of Europe in those times was undergoing a great change while the popes themselves struggled with the German emperors. In the East, moreover, emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259-1289) had recaptured Constantinople in 1261 and brought the Latin empire to an end, which had got established as a result of the fourth crusade in 1204. Since the state of affairs was undoubtedly complex and difficult, Pope Gregory X had conceived a very broad plan involving the whole Christian world. In this strategy the so-called eastern question was of highest importance. The pope sought to conclude a treaty with Michael VIII Palaeologus and to unite the eastern and western churches to strengthen his position within the European powers. For – as the pope thought – if the churches were united and the might of all Christian peoples were combined, the problem of the Muslim conquered Holy Land could be resolved and the Roman church would flourish with fresh authority and influence in the western states. Therefore, for Gregory X, when he convoked the general council, the union with the Greeks was among the important topics. After long preparatory arrangements the council assembled at Lyons in 1274. Probably there were present about 300 bishops, 60 abbots and a large number of other clergy, many of whom apparently were theologians. In the fourth session the union of the Greek Church with the Latin Church was decreed and defined. The union, however, appears to have been imposed on the Greek side by the emperor Michael VIII. He wanted the support of the pope in order to deter Charles of Anjou from an attack on the Byzantine Empire. At the same time the majority of the Greek clergy opposed the union. The agreement was therefore fleeting, either because in the East the clergy steadily resisted it, or because the popes after Gregory X changed their plan of action.

However, what is important here, is that at the Council of Lyons (1274) the byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus signed a confession of faith, where, for the first time in ecclesiastical history, the figure seven for the sacraments appears in an official synodical document:

> Tenet etiam et docet eadem sancta Romana Ecclesia, septem esse ecclesiastica sacramenta, unum scilicet bapisima …; aliud est sacramentum confirmationis, quod per manum impositionem episcopum conferunt, chrismation renatos; aliud est paenitentia, aliud Eucharistia, aliud sacramentum ordinis, aliud est matrimunium, aliud extrema unction….
> The same Holy Roman Church abides and teaches, there are seven ecclesiastical sacraments, i.e. the one baptism…; another one is confirmation administered through laying on hands by the bishop who anoints the reborn; another one is confession, another one the Eucharist, another one is the sacrament of ordination, another one is marriage, another one the ultimate unction….[10]

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9 Cf. ROBERG 1990; LANGE 2012, 71-74.

10 DENZINGER/HÜNERMANN 1991, 380. Engl. trans. D.W. Winkler.

This *Professio fidei Michaelis Palaeologi* was publicly read at the fourth session of the council on July 6, 1274.

2.b. East Syriac: 'Abdishō bar Brikā († 1318) and Timothy II († 1332)

In the East Syriac tradition there are only two theologians, who developed kind of a systematic sacramental theology: ʿAbdishō bar Brikā and Timothy II.[11] From the 5th century onwards, some reflections especially on baptism, Eucharist and ordination, but also on some other rites could be found; among others in texts written by Narsai of Nisibis (5th c.), Babai the Great (6th c.), Joseph Hazzayā, Abraham bar Lîpheh (7th c.), Theodore bar Kônî, Timothy I, Îshôʿdad of Merv (8/9th c.), and John bar Zôʿbî (12/13th c.).[12] But there is no systematic reflection at all and none of them is claiming completeness. This is only done by these two authors of the 14th century. But they do not have the same list of *raze*.

In his *Book of the Pearl,* ʿAbdishō bar Brikā presents a list of seven *raze*, a number which has been not used before him in East Syriac sacramental theology. The book is a concise presentation of east Syriac dogmatic theology of the 13/14th century in five chapters comprising (1) Trinitarian theology, (2) Creation/Protology, (3) Christology (4) Sacramental Theology, and (5) Eschatology. The short presentation of the *raze* in the fourth chapter is quoted by Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV according to the English translation of Badger as his answer to the above mentioned BEM-Document. Shortly after ʿAbdishō, Timothy II in his reflections noticeably agreed on the number, but not at all on the *raze* themselves. It is interesting to read following remark of ʿAbdishō, which demonstrates, that in his times there was already some agreement on the number of *raze* but in a certain flexibility:

> But some Christians who possess not the *Leaven* reckon Marriage, according to Christ's ordinance … the seventh Sacrament.[13]

In 1318, Timothy, Metropolitan of Mosul and Arbela, became the successor of Yahballahā III as Patriarch of the Church of the East. After his inauguration, he held a synod, which is documented partly in the fifth part of the Nomocanon.[14] Timothy wrote the most comprehensive treatise on the theology of *raze* in the East Syriac Church called *The causes of the seven mysteries of the Church.*[15] He presents an explanation of the liturgy and treats systematically doctrinal questions of the *raze*.

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[11] Cf. de Vries 1947.
[12] Cf. de Vries 1943, 188-203.
[13] Badger 1852, 405.
[14] Cf. Baumstark 1922, 325.
[15] Cf. de Vries 1942, 40-94. Content with Syriac extracts cf. Assemani 1728, 572-580. Cf. also Toma 2007.

Timothy II does not explain why he counts seven *raze*, he just adopts the number and arranges his book in seven chapters on (1) priesthood, (2) consecration of a church and the altar (3) baptism (4) the holy raze of body and blood (5) the consecration of monastic life (6) the office for the departed (7) marriage:

> Cap. 1 de sacerdotio, Cap. 2 de consecration ecclesiae et altaris, Cap. 3 de baptism, et sacro oleo, Cap. 4 de sanctis sacramentis corporis et sanguinis, Cap. 5 de benediction monachorum, Cap. 6 de officio pro defunctis, Cap. 7 de sacramento desponsations.[16]

According to Timothy, all *raze* are performed by the priest or bishop, as well as he differentiates between major and minor *raze*. Laying on hands (priesthood) consecration of the altar, baptism and Eucharist are mysteries in the strict sense, while the others are seen as secondary. Among the *raze* mentioned, the consecration of monastic life is mentioned only by Timothy. The office of the departed is mentioned as a *raza* already in early Syriac theology, but it is only Timothy, who counts it to the seven, as he does with marriage.

It is obvious that counting seven sacraments derives from Latin influence, since this one really starts in the second half of the 14th century and none of the East Syriac authors up to the 13th century were using a specific number of *raze*. Also the theological reasoning about the validity of a sacrament sounds very scholastic in ʿAbdishō's Book of the Pearl:

> *First*, a true priest, who has attained the priesthood rightly, according to the requirements of the Church. Secondly, the word and command of the Lord of Sacraments, whereby He ordained each of them. Thirdly, right intention and confirmed faith on the part of those who partake of them, believing that the effect of the Sacraments takes place by a heavenly power.[17]

Nevertheless, in the process of taking over some of the scholastic theological ideas the Church of the East kept its rites and traditions. Thus the seven sacraments of the Latin Church were not simply reproduced but rather were adapted to the specific situation of the Church of the East by taking over the figure "seven" while, at the same time, such unique traditions like the Holy Leaven were kept in the list.

3. How might the transfer of scholastic sacramental theology to the Church of the East have taken place?

Of course one might remark that there were western Missionaries, Dominicans and Franciscans. But for the question of sacraments it makes no sense to inves-

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16 ASSEMANI 1725, 240.
17 BADGER 1852, 405.

tigate mediaeval travelers with theological background to the East before the Council of Lyons (1274), such as John de Plano Carpini († 1252) and Wilhehn of Rubruck († 1270). The teachings of seven sacraments went towards East by attempts to establish church unions. Only a few years after the Council of Lyons a Mongol delegation reached Rome, as documented in the *History of Yahballaha and Rabban Sauma*.[18] This text was written after 1317 by an anonymous author – originally in Persian and preserved in Syriac – who most likely was eyewitness of many of the events of the journey of the two monks from China to the West. The two Uighur or Öngut monks set out for Jerusalem in order to pray at the tomb of the Lord. As well known, Bar Sauma and Marcus were unable to travel to Jerusalem because the city was under the control of the Mameluke Sultan Baibar I († 1277). The then 35-year old Marcus got consecrated as bishop of Cathay (northern China) and adopted the name Yahballaha.[19] Bar Sauma was named vicar general. When Patriarch Mar Dinkha I died in 1281, the East Syriac bishops elected Yahballaha as the new Catholicos of the East probably because of his understanding of relations with the Mongols. It certainly was a political election, as the new Catholicos had little knowledge of Syriac and knew no Arabic at all.

In 1287 Il-Khan Argūn (1284-1291) wrote to Pope Honorius IV that the great Khan Kublai had commissioned him to liberate the "land of the Christians". Argūn's father, Hūlagū, had been beaten by the Egyptian Mamelukes in 1260 in Palestine; therefore the Il-Khan now was looking for allies against the Muslims, whom he saw in the Christian occident. Argun appointed the Uighur Bar Sauma to make the mission to Europe. The monk traveled through Constantinople, where he visited Emperor Andronicus II Palaiologus (1259-1332), and in June 1287 he reached Naples where he reported how many Mongols, Turks, and Chinese were Christians and that the children of several rulers had been baptized. In Rome the See of the Pope was vacant – Pope Honrius IV (1285-1287) had just died – and therefore Bar Sauma only had a dispute with the cardinals. From an historical point of view this direct encounter between a representative of the Church of the East – even more coming from China – and Western Latin Church hierarchy and theologians is unique. According to the narrative, a dispute about the confession of faith arose; among others we find here the Christology of the East Syriac master theologian Babai the Great († 628) who developed a terminology of two *kyane* (ܟܝ̈ܢܐ), two *qnome* (ܩܢ̈ܘܡܐ) and one *parsopa* (ܦܪܨܘܦܐ).[20] But Bar Sauma left Rome and traveled further on to Paris, where the king of France, Philip IV the Fair (1268-1314), received him. In Bordeaux he met King Edward I of England (1272-1307). Then he journeyed back to Rome

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18 Cf. Syriac Text: Bedjan 1895. Engl. trans. Budge 1928. Ital. trans. Borbone, 2000. German trans. Toepel 2008.

19 Cf. Hage 1983, 93; Fiey 1988, 209-220.

20 Cf. Winkler 2003, 83-99; Abramowski 1974, 219-244; Abramowski 1975, 289-343; Chediath 1982.

where, in the meantime, Nicholas IV (1288-1292) had been elected pope. The Pope allowed him to celebrate his East Syriac Liturgy in one of the Churches in Rome.

> Some days later Rabban Ṣâwmâ said to Mâr Pâpâ, "I wish to celebrate the Eucharist so that ye may see our use"; and the Pope commanded him to do so as he had asked. And on that day a very large number gathered together in order to see how the ambassador of the Mongols celebrated the Eucharist. And when they had seen they rejoiced and said, "The language is different, but the use is the same."[21]

In the following, Bar Sauma also participated in all the religious ceremonies of the Holy Week. On Palm Sunday of 1288 he received the Eucharist from the Pope. Thus, the East Syriac Church and the Catholic Church considered each other as one. Upon return, Pope Nicholas IV gave Bar Sauma several gifts and among others a letter for his Patriarch Yahballaha. This specific letter contained the confession of faith of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos[22], where the seven normative sacraments appear for the first time in an official synodical document of the Catholic Church. With the transmission of the letter from Pope to Patriarch scholastic sacramental theology was made known to the Church of the East officially. Already Martin Jugie calls attention to the fact of transmitting the confession of Michael VIII Palaiologos to Yahballaha.[23]

The time of the transmission correlates with the works of ʿAbdishō bar Brikhā and Timothy II. Unfortunately we do not have evidence, whether the letter was copied and distributed in the area of the Church of the East. But there is also a tradition that Yahbalaha III commissioned ʿAbdishō to write his dogmatic treatise *Book of the Pearl* in 1297/98. Further, right after the arrival of Bar Sauma back in Bagdad, the Dominican Ricoldo de Montecroce († 1320) arrived in the city and in 1290 was allowed to preach in Churches of Bagdad;[24] probably a direct follow-up of the encounter between Pope Nicholas IV and Rabban Sauma in Rome. Nevertheless, as easy could be imagined, cultural and theological misunderstandings persisted. Two highly controversial terms of the Christological disputes of the 5th century were *theotokos* (θεοτόκος) and *christotokos* (χριστοτόκος), i.e. "Godbearer" and "Christbearer",[25] *theotokos* being used by the Church within the Roman Empire and *christotokos* by the Church of the East. When Ricoldo the Montecorce mentioned that Mary is *theotokos* in one of his sermons, he got kicked out of the Church and the East Syriac Christians performed a ritual of purification of the building.[26]

21 BUDGE 1928, 190.
22 Cf. DALMAIS 1989, 142.
23 Cf. JUGIE 1935; cf. also DE VRIES 1947, 56.
24 Cf. TISSERANT 1931, 222.
25 Cf. WINKLER 2012; BAUM/WINKLER 2003, 21-26.
26 Ibid.

Final Remarks

Contacts between the Church of the East and the Catholic Church persisted. For example in 1302 the Öngut Yahballaha III sent a letter to Pope Boniface VII, as well as one to Benedict XI dated 1304.[27] However, it seems that the Latin influence on sacramental theology has been short-lived. After ʿAbdishō bar Brikhā and Timothy II, the number seven for *raze* did not really establish themselves. As one example might serve the profession of faith which Yuhannān Sulāqā sent to Pope Julius III in the 16th century to enter church communion with the Church of Rome.[28] This letter contained Baptism, Sacrifice (Eucharist), Marriage and Holy Oil. Also later documents don't give us more wisdom on the issue. Since *raza* is identified as a mystery of salvation, its limitation to seven rites seems to be awkward for the Church of the East, especially if there is no systematic reflection on a general sacramental theology as it is the case in western theology.[29]

It is thoroughly consequent – as the well-known Metropolitan of Trichur, Mar Aprem Mooken, detects in 1978 – that the only catechetical book for the Church of the East in the 20th century, the "Messianic teachings" do not talk about a specific number of *raze*.[30] Only since Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV was using the list of ʿAbdishō bar Brikā in the 1980s, these *raze* actually got normative for the Assyrian Church of the East and also used in succeeding ecumenical dialogues (such as the one initiated by the foundation PRO ORIENTE).[31]

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27 Cf. Tisserant 1931, 223; BAUM/WINKLER 2003, 100.
28 Cf. DE VRIES 1947, 56.
29 SORO 2001, 22-43.
30 Cf. MOOKEN 1978, 18.
31 Cf. PRO ORIENTE 2001. 2003.2004; WINKLER 2003, 183-191.

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YING/應/NIRMĀṆA: A CASE STUDY OF THE TRANSLATABILITY OF BUDDHISM INTO JINGJIAO

ZHU Donghua
Tsinghua University, China

After the wind of Jingjiao was blowing eastward (景風東扇) in Tang Dynasty, Chinese Christians ushered in an epoch-making establishment of paradigm in the Chinese Buddhist-Christian dialogue. A highly fruitful outcome of this inter-faith dialogue was the cultivation of the attitude to dialogue as a path to great inspiration and valuable insights. Chinese Jingjiao had deep historical roots that can be traced back to the Church of the East (or the East Syriac Church). Its theology inherited the legacy of the Syriac writers such as Tatian and St. Ephrem, and was based primarily on the works of Diodore of Tarsus and, above all, Theodore of Mopsuestia,[1] the great master of the Antiochian school. Jingjiao's doctrines of the Trinity and Christology were therefore intrinsically motivated in the original context of the East Syriac Christianity. Besides emphasizing the original context of the derivation, what is also important to mention is Jingjiao's "new" related context, i.e. the native cultural tradition in Tang China.

The Sui-Tang period, the supposed "Golden Age" of Chinese Buddhism, saw the rise of the truly indigenous Chinese schools of Buddhism, and from this diversity emerged some common concerns. An obvious instance of this point is both the Tiantai masters Zhiyi 天臺智顗 and the Dilun master Jingying Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 made, respectively, insightful commentaries on the doctrines of Buddha-body and Buddha-nature. Their efforts at Buddhology established the basis for further inter-faith dialogue and inculturation. It is Jingjiao theologian Jing Jing who seized this precious but fragile opportunity to establish the translatability of Buddhism into Jingjiao, and thus made an important contribution to comparative religion and comparative theology.

Obviously, in Jing Jing's theology, the doctrine of the Trinity 三身一體 /ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ played a central role. The Dunhuang document *Zunjing* 尊經 addresses a salutation to each person of the Holy Trinity before the listing of books translated by Jing Jing: "Salutations to the mysterious body, royal Father Aluohe and to the received body 應身, the royal Son Mishihe, the body of wit-

[1] BAUMER 2006, 8.

ness, Ruha de-kudsa. The above three bodies belong together to one entity."[2] What Jing Jing called "three bodies" 三身 might be born out of his studies on Buddhist doctrine of Tri-kaya 三身.[3] As an integral part of Tri-kaya, Yingshen (應身/Nirmāṇa-kāya) is particularly noteworthy for its role as an ideal and effective bridge between Christology and Buddhology. In what follows I will focus on the meaning of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa and attempt to lay bare the intellectual basis on which Jing Jing established the translatability of Buddhist "Nirmāṇa-kāya" 應身 into Jingjiao's Yingshen 應身.

1. Buddhist Conception of Yingshen 應身/Nirmāṇa-kāya

1.1. Jing Jing (Adam) and Buddhism

Jing Jing, who also bore the Syriac name Adam, was a "Nestorian" scholar-bishop famous for his translation works and his composition of the Xi'an Fu Stele inscription. With an obvious style of Pianwen 駢文, the Xi'an Fu Stele inscription comprised a series of paired sentences that are rhymed with alternating tetra-syllabic and hexa-syllabic lines. It abounded with quotations from various Chinese classics in many degrees and nuances for special occasions. The content indicates that Jing Jing was very familiar with the classics of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. From the high standard of classical Chinese learning of the author, it can be logically concluded that Jing Jing grew up in China where he received a systematic education both in Chinese classics and Syriac theology.

However, it is not easy to evaluate the influence Buddhist sutras and ideas had exerted upon Jing Jing. According to *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 [Zhenyuan Year New Catalogue of Buddhism] edited by Monk Yuanzhao 圓照, Jing Jing was invited to co-operate with the Kapisa monk Prajna to translate the *Satpâramitâ Sutra* 六波羅蜜經 in the second Zhenyuan year (A.D. 786). The translation was from the Hu language into Chinese and finished in seven fascicles. At that time Prajna was not familiar with the Hu language, nor understood the Chinese language, and as Jing Jing did not know Sanskrit, nor was versed in the teaching of the Sakya, so the translation was not successful. Jing Jing was scolded for 'seeking vain glory'.[4] We can reconsider Yuanzhao's recording from two perspectives: 1) If Jing Jing was not familiar with the ideas of Buddhism, why did Monk Prajna ask him to help with the translation work? Probably Prajna would have taken no notice of the Christian priest Jing Jing if the latter had not acquired a good reputation in his deep understand-

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2 Translation of the Jingjiao documents given by Li Tang. See TANG 2002, 183.

3 The Tri-kaya doctrine posits three bodies: Dharma-kāya 法身, Nirmāṇa-kāya 應身 and saṃbhoga-kāya 報身. Jing Jing did not follow ostensibly the Buddhist model, but converted it into a three-body model (i.e. Miaoshen 妙身, Yingshen 應身 and Zhengshen 證身).

4 DZZ 55·891c～892a. Cf. SAEKI 1916, 18.

ing both of Chinese language and Buddhist ideas. 2) It's unfair to render the harsh and critical judgments toward Jing Jing, and it seems that an exclusivist bias haunted in the Buddhist translation workshop.

Jing Jing's version of *Satpâramitâ Sutra* did not survive. The Jesuit scholar Henri Havret once made a conjecture that Jing Jing "may have tried to turn the *Satpâramitâ Sutra* into a Christian treatise," but A. C. Moule maintained that this view "is interesting but not convincing."[5] It is naturally understandable for Christian scholars to show sympathy to Jing Jing. Havret's opinion is based primarily on surmise rather than adequate evidence. However, Havret's surmise suggests a specific orientation to the question — it seems that the cause of failure in co-translation is not due to Jing Jing's 'being not well-versed in Buddhist teachings', but rather to his hermeneutic approach to translation which Buddhist translators eschewed and rejected. The fact that Jing Jing had a chance to cooperate with a Buddhist monk in translation of *Satpâramitâ Sutra* shows that Jing Jing had developed some contacts and relationships external and even internal to the circle of scholar-monks. It is possible for Jing Jing to generate systematically a comprehensive knowledge of Buddhism. The Jingjiao Stele text (781) was written before the translation of *Satpâramitâ Sutra*, and it shows that Jing Jing was familiar with Buddhist ideas and could use flexibly and effectively a series of Buddhist terms and phrases to convey his theological ideas. He mentioned such terms and expressions as "Miaoshen" 妙身 (exquisite body), "Fenshen" 分身 (divided body), "Du" 度 (perfections), "Men" 門 (doors), "Jie" 戒 (precepts), "Jing" 淨 (pure, holy), "Fajie" 法界 (dharma-dhātu), and "to commit Himself with universal compassion to relieve the sufferings of all living beings" 廣慈救眾苦. Obviously, it's very unfair of Yuanzhao to say that Jing Jing "had never obtained any pearl in the mine of truth 未獲半珠." And furthermore, some Jingjiao documents[6] indicate that Jing Jing, as an experienced and serious translator, was very well versed in the translation principles and techniques, so it is impossible for him to "translate" a Buddhist sutra to be a Christian scripture. Maybe the real question at stake is whether the translated sutra could be preserved pure and unadulterated, even though Jing Jing's comparative perspective and syncretistic approach did not necessarily lead to a distortion and interpolation of the original text. The Buddhist translators' exclusivistic attitude toward Jing Jing implies an unjustifiable overreaction, on the one hand, and a justifiable anxiety about distortion, on the other hand. No matter what you try to do, whether you do a translation work or a comparative study, it is clear that restraint needs to be exercised in the fusion of horizons and transformation of conceptions. Because Jing Jing's version of *Satpâramitâ Sutra* was no-longer-extant, we are not sure to what degree Jing Jing's comparative perspective and syncretistic approach had affected his translation work. But we are

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5 MOULE 1930, 69.

6 See Li Tang's translation in TANG 2002, 183-187.

now concerned with much more than a question of good translation. One of the most remarkable ventures in inculturation during the period was one initiated by Jing Jing. From his extant works, we can see an intimate relationship between his theological writing and his involvement in Buddhist tradition.

Jing Jing had familiarized himself with the Buddhist documents which include (but are not limited to) *Satpâramitâ Sutra*. We don't know how many sutras Jing Jing had read, and to what extent Jing Jing had comprehended the teachings of various Buddhist schools of the Sui-Tang period. Based on Jing Jing's extant works, we may assert, generally speaking, that Jing Jing was well versed in the Buddhist doctrines of Six Pâramitâs 六度, Tri-kaya 三身, tathagata-garbha 如來藏. Because Jingjiao theology attached great importance to the Economic Trinity and Christology, it is reasonable for Jing Jing to pay attention to the Buddhist doctrines of Six Pâramitâs, Tri-kaya, tathagata-garbha. In what follows I will first give a brief overview of tathagata-garbha, and then explain the doctrines of Six Pâramitâs and Tri-kaya.

Jing Jing mentioned the "lofty primitive nature" 混元之性 in Jingjiao Stele text, and used such terms as "original true nature" 人元真性 and "substance" 依止 (aśraya) in his translation work *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* 三威蒙度贊.[7] Obviously, all these terms show an intimate relationship with the Buddhist conceptions of Buddha-dhatu (Buddha-gotra) or tathagata-garbha. Master Yinshun 印順 said in his *A Study on Tathagata-garbha*, that the doctrine of tathagata-garbha was highly emphasized after it was introduced into China. Chinese Garland Sect's "inherent arising" 性起, Chan Sect's "inherent generating" 性生 and Tiantai Sect's "inherent entailment" 性具, are all based on the idea of Tathagata-garbha. In some degree, the doctrine of Tathagata-garbha has developed and propagated to be one of the general ideas and mainstream notions of Chinese Buddhism. From the end of 3rd century to 7th century, many important Tathagata-garbha texts were translated into Chinese.[8] Conditions of this sort may provide a chance for Jing Jing to acquire and read such Tathagata-garbha texts as *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* 大般涅槃經, *Lankavatara Sutra* 楞伽經, *Treatise on Buddha-dhatu* 佛性論, or *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahayana* 大乘起信論, even though we are not sure which prevalent text he had read.

1.2. Yingshen 應身/Nirmāṇa-kaya and Its Sources in Buddhist Sutras

As a component of tri-kaya schema, Yingshen (Nirmāṇa-kaya) involves in such idea-factors as the relationship between Nirmāṇa-kaya and tri-kaya, the meaning of Ying (Nirmāṇa) and Shen (Kaya), and etc. Because the topic of this paper

7 See WENG Shaojun's edition and commentary of the Jingjiao Documents in WENG 1996, 44, 199.

8 YINSHUN 2009, 2-8.

centers on the meaning of Ying (Nirmāṇa), source-analysis will also concentrate on this conception. First, regarding the *Satpâramitâ Sutra*, Jing Jing's version is certainly lost, but Prajna's new version is still extant. According to Monk Liangxiu 良秀, the co-translator of the new version, the *Satpâramitâ Sutra* can be regarded as "the doorway to the liberation of all living beings", and therefore is fundamentally about "the superb thought on the Absolute Truth".[9] Modem Chinese Monk Taixu 太虛 also pointed out, the main purpose of *Satpâramitâ Sutra* is to emphasize the importance of the Six Pâramitâs as vehicles for the liberation, and to present the bodhisattva ideal into doctrinal statements of the bodhisattva path.[10] Therefore, it is reasonable for us to conclude that, through the translation of *Satpâramitâ Sutra*, Jing Jing had got a better understanding of the bodhisattva ethic of compassion and universal liberation concern of Yingshen (Nirmāṇa-kaya).

It is well known that the doctrine of tri-kaya (three bodies) is predominantly associated with the texts of the Yogacara School 瑜伽行派. As the third great school of Indian Mahayana Buddhism, the Yogacara School had made a major contribution to Buddhology by refining the theories concerning tri-kaya. In the Yogacara tradition, the historical Buddha (Nirmāṇa-kaya) is the proactive aspect of the Dharma-kaya in the phenomenal world; he is visible to ordinary human beings and will inspire people to embark on the path of bodhisattva. Because the Nirmāṇa-kaya was conceived as the eternal truth, the doctrine of tri-kaya provided an intellectual foundation to a more devotional form of religion.

The *Suvarnaprabhasottama sutra* 金光明經 is one of the most important middle-period sutras translated from an Indian original. It advocates the doctrine of tri-kaya that signified a further step in the transformation of the Buddha into transcendent being, foreshadowing further developments in Chinese Mahayana tradition. The earliest translation of this sutra by Dharmaksenma 曇無讖 did not contain the tri-kaya chapter. However, the other two Chinese translations, one by Paramartha 真諦 and the other by Yijing 義淨, contained the tri-kaya chapter where both translators had Chinese "Yingshen 應身" for Sanskrit "Nirmāṇa-kaya". One of Paramartha's Chinese disciples was Huikuang, and Huikuang was the supervisor of Zhiyi 智顗, the founder of Tiantai school. In some degree, Paramartha's work was the point of departure for Zhiyi – the latter had written two commentary works based on the foundation laid by the former: one is the *Textual Commentary on Suvarnaprabhasottama sutra* 金光明經文句, the other is the *Profound Meaning of Suvarnaprabhasottama sutra* 金光明經玄義. Besides the Tiantai master Zhiyi, the noteworthy representatives of Sui Dynasty were the Dilun master Jingying Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 and the Sanlun master

9 Cf. DZZ 55·762c.
10 TAIXU 2004, 61, 85.

Jizang 吉藏. They also offered an ingenious and pithy analysis of Yingshen 應身 respectively in *A Commentary on Suvarnaprabhasottama sutra* 金光明經疏 and *Mahayana Encyclopaedia* 大乘義章. Certainly the related discussions of Tri-kaya and Nirmāṇa-kaya are not limited to the sutras and treatises above, but without doubt, both Zhiyi's and Huiyuan's commentaries were the most important representatives of the time. Totally immersed in the religious and cultural atmosphere of the Sui-Tang Period, Jing Jing was inevitably subject to the effective history of the Tri-kaya doctrine when he attempted to establish the translatability of Yingshen (Nirmāṇa-kaya).

2. The Basis for Interfaith Translatability of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa

In the Dunghuang document *Zunjing*, the second person of the trinity is called Yingshen 應身. As a divine name of the Holy Son, Yingshen 應身 was applied by Jing Jing to show the life of the Trinity in time and space, and to describe the "economy" of salvation. The following part will focus on the meaning of Ying 應; the aim is to properly involve analyzing Ying 應 and Nirmāṇa 應 within the context of their respective traditions. Three points will be examined carefully: 1) the fundamental motifs of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa, 2) the universality of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa, and 3) the soteriological elements in the enactment of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa. An intellectual foundation for understanding the interfaith translatability of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa will be provided, based on the comparative study of the meaning of the concept in both Buddhist and Christian traditions

2.1. Agape and Maitrî-karuṇâ as the Fundamental Motifs of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa

In modern times, the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros* has influenced the theological discourses on love more than other books. Nygren explained his understanding of fundamental motif in his book: "A Fundamental motif is that which forms the answer given by some particular outlook to a question of such a fundamental nature that it can be described in a categorical sense as a fundamental question."[11]

According to this method of motif-research, it can be rightly said that the fundamental motif in Ying 應 of Yingshen (the second person of trinity) is love (ἀγάπη). One of the Manuscripts of the Assyrian Christians in Urmia (Persia) describes that the son of God, God the Word, because of his great love for us, took from our race a complete man, and united him with him in an incomprehensible union.[12] In *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, Nestorius pointed out with the same intention: "The two natures (that of divinity and that of humanity)" are

11 NYGREN 1953,42.
12 ABRAMOWSKI 1972, 88.

"distinct in ousia" but are "united by love and in the same prosopon."[13] Syriac Christian texts often quoted St. Paul's words in their theological construction: agape "now abide", it is "the greatest" with the "breadth, and length, and depth, and height."(*1Co*13:13; *Eph*2:4,3:18) "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."(*Rom*5:8) Since God is love, divine suffering was frequently made a central motif in Syriac theology. For example, in his commentary on *the Nicene Creed*, the Antiochene theologian Theodore of Mopsuestia zealously cautioned that one should not undervalue the soteriological function of the "prosopon of man" (i.e. Yingshen). He said:

> It would be against our duty to minimize that man who was assumed on our behalf ... (and) received upon himself death and passion – an ignominious death by crucifixion – so that He should grant us delight in the future pleasures, ... (It would indeed, I say, be against our duty to minimize that man) who endured all these things for us and not to remain steadfast in His love ܚܘܒܗ and not to follow His commandments and value His love and affection more highly than anything else. We ought to show forth such feelings because of the ineffable benefits that through Him will accrue to us.[14]

St. Ephrem also talked about the transformation of divine nature and gave an epitome of salvation in his *Hymns on the Nativity*: "That Lord of the natures today / changed himself against his nature / so that it should not be difficult for us ... / Today the divinity / imprinted (ṭeb'at) itself in humanity / so that humanity should also decorate (tesṭabat) itself / in the signet-ring (tab'a') of divinity. (Nat. I. 97, 99)."[15] The entire aim of Ephrem's poetry is to give birth in God's creatures to that true worship of the Creator of all, and to instill a desire to live the mystery of God's love toward humanity.[16] Many of Ephrem's concise statements on the salvific nature of the incarnation have been frequently compared to Athanasius' famous maxim: "God became human so that humans might become God." Athanasius attempted to give a more elaborate theological account of the relationship between Incarnation and the love of God. He said, "It was our sorry case that caused the Word to come down, our transgression that called out His love for us, so that He made haste to help us and to appear among us. It is we who were the cause of His taking human form, and for our salvation that in His great love He was both born and manifested in a human body."[17]

It is obvious that Athanasius, Ephrem and Theodore of Mopsuestia invariably centered on the functional aspects of Christology and confirmed love as the fundamental motif of the functional and soteriological Christology.

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13 NESTORIUS 1925, 55.
14 THEODORE 1932, 80, 195.
15 BUCK 1999, 237.
16 MATHEWS 1994 in *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* (38.1), 249.
17 ATHANASIUS 1993,29.

As in the case of Jingjiao, Chinese Buddhism took the loving kindness and compassion 慈悲/ maitrî-karuṇâ as the fundamental motif in the response 應 /Ying of Yingshen (Nirmāṇa-kaya). According to the *Dazhidulun* 大智度論 /*Mahaprajnapâramitâsastra*, "maitrî-karuṇâ is the fundamental spirit of Buddhist law (Dharma)…maitrî-karuṇâ is the greatest law (Dharma)."[18] During the Sui Dynasty, Chinese monk-scholars were keen to involve themselves in rather noticeable discussions on the Buddhist ethics of the "kind response"慈應 and "compassionate response"悲應. Master Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 speaks in *Mahayana Encyclopaedia* 大乘義章 about the revelation-enlightenment function of the Tathagata 如來: Being attentive and thoughtful, the Tathagata 如來 brings, in a kind response, happiness to those who are unhappy; and relieves, in a compassionate response, the living beings from sufferings."[19]

It is clearly seen here that maitrî is the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness to those who are unhappy, and karuṇâ is the intention and capacity to relieve the sufferings of the living beings. In other words, the response 應/Ying of Yingshen (Nirmāṇa-kaya) to the living beings is based on the maitrî-karuṇâ of Buddha. Master Zhiyi 天臺智顗, a contemporary of Master Huiyuan, also talked about the motif of Buddha's "coming": The word 'coming 來' indicates all the Buddhas are loving kindness and compassion. The Buddhas should have been living in the secret matrix 秘密藏/guhyagarbha, why were they born? They came because of the loving kindness and compassion.[20]

Obviously, from the perspective of Master Zhiyi, Buddha is maitrî-karuṇâ, and maitrî-karuṇâ is Buddha. The most powerful response of Yingshen (Nirmāṇa-kaya) to the living beings is characterized by the "Great compassion for those who are known and unknown 無緣大慈", and "the boundless mercy for all beings 同體大悲." Therefore, Both Master Zhiyi and Master Huiyuan completely focused on the functional aspects of Yingshen and confirmed maitrî-karuṇâ as the fundamental motif of the functional Buddhology.

To be sure, Jingjiao's doctrine of love (agape) and Buddhist teaching of maitrî-karuṇâ are deeply rooted in different religious traditions. But there is a profound parallel-overlap between the Christian and Buddhist understanding of love and its relationship to the enlightenment-liberation function of Yingshen 應身 /Nirmāṇa-kaya. First, from an ontological perspective, both agape and maitrî-karuṇâ are pure *a priori* and unconditional love, freely bestowed and generously fulfilling. Second, from a functional perspective, either agape or maitrî-karuṇâ is an intentional response to the miserable situation of human beings. Just as the

18 DZZ 25·256c.
19 DZZ 44·870c-871a.
20 DZZ 39·49a.

coming of Buddha was a "kind response" and "compassionate response" to the calling of the living beings, the "enanthropesis" (inhumanation) of the Holy Son embodied and fulfilled the economic love of God. Here contains a correlation of the motif of love and the motif of patterning after the ultimate reality (Jesus Christ, Buddha), and in some degree, agape and maitrî-karuṇâ serve as the soteriological bridges to ultimate transformation.

When Jing Jing attempted to determine the translatability of Yingshen 應身 /Nirmāṇa-kaya, he had certainly considered both motifs of agape and maitrî-karuṇâ. In the Xi'an Fu inscription, Jing Jing regarded love as one of the permanent doors leading into a new life. And in his *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, Jing Jing addressed the Holy Father as the "merciful Father 慈父", the Holy Son as the "Lamb of mercy and joy 慈喜羔."[21] Ingeniously, Jing Jing borrowed the Buddhist conception of "compassionate response" as the basis for understanding and translating such theological claims as God is love, and Holy Son embodied and fulfilled the economic love of God. Jing Jing grasped deeply the functional and soteriological significance of both agape and maitrî-karuṇâ as the fundamental religious motifs. In this regard, Jing Jing can be regarded as an outstanding scholar who knew how to get results from a crossover strategy.

2.2. The Universality of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa

As global forms of world religions, both Buddhism and Christianity lived in the full openness of universality. They both offered universal salvation, and their characteristics of a universal religion had strongly been shaped respectively by the universal economy of salvation centered in the Yingshen of the Word and the Yingshen of Buddha.

Jingjiao documents contain such vivid and accurate notions of Yingshen's universal economy -- it is Yingshen who can give shelter to all the living and the dead (大庇存亡)" and who can put the winds and rains in seasons (風雨時), the Empire in peace (天下靜), the people in order and harmony (人能理) and all creatures in good condition (物能清)... Because of the meritorious effect of His mighty acts (景力能事之功用), it is right that the Illustrious Religion (Jingjiao) "should have free course under the sky 宜行天下.[22] In one of Jing Jing's translation works, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* 三威蒙度贊, Yingshen was called the "all-respected Mishihe, the great holy one (大聖普尊彌施訶)" whose mighty power can save "millions of lives" from "all sufferings" (廣度苦界救無億), and therefore, "all shall venerate (Him)."[23] Jing Jing's words recall St. Ephrem's and St. Athanasius' accounts of the universal economy of Jesus Christ: The former pre-

21 WENG 1996, 182-183.
22 WENG 1996, 51, 54, 64.
23 Translation of the Jingjiao text by Li Tang. See TANG 2002, 181-182.

sents Him as the Physician of "all", of "us", of "Humanity", and of all "sinners" and wounded. His function is to heal all "bruises" and "pains" of man.[24] The latter provides insight into the work of Jesus Christ by saying that He alone, being Word of the Father and above all, was in consequence both able to "recreate all", and worthy to "suffer on behalf of all" and to be "an ambassador for all" with the Father.[25]

Traditionally, the Buddha was called "Shi Zun (世尊)", "the Venerable One of the World"; in the same way, Yingshen the Messiah was called "Pu Zun (普尊)" "the universally Honored One" by Jing Jing. Both holy names were adopted to underscore their emphasis on the universal value incorporated in the response of Yingshen 應身 to the whole world. Master Zhiyi said in his *Textual Commentary on Suvarnaprabhasottama sutra* that "it is because of the great benefits offered to the living beings and the great honor attained from the whole world that He was called the Venerable One."[26] In the *Profound Meaning of Suvarnaprabhasottama sutra*, Master Zhiyi further pointed out that Ying 應 refers to "making merit" 功德 or "taking effect" 起用; and the purpose of Ying 應 is to "make everyone happy and comfortable," and "pay attention to everyone and enlighten them all." "Yingshen 應身 refers to the all-embracing response to the whole world."[27] So, from the perspective of Master Zhiyi, Yingshen embodies the altruistic Mahayana spirit of universal salvation. Master Huiyuan likewise held that Yingshen embodies the "great heart" of Mahayana Buddhism. He regarded "Ying" as Buddha's response to the "calling of the living beings," and interpreted the term "response" as meaning that "(Buddha) shares a common body with the whole world."[28]

It is obvious that Jing Jing's transplantation strategy was based on his understanding of the universal and soteriological significance of the Ying (response). He defined the Ying (response) of Yingshen (the Messiah) as "inhumanation (同人)" just as Master Huiyuan defined the Ying (response) of Yingshen (the Buddha) as "sharing the world 共世." In both cases we see an emphasis on the universal concern of Yingshen, even though there is a difference here between these two definitions: for Christians the enactment of Ying mainly leads to love for all human beings, while for the Buddhists, the same vision leads to compassion for all living beings.

24 SHEMUNKASHO 2004, 135.
25 ATHANASIUS 1993,33.
26 See DZZ 39·65a.
27 DZZ 39·4b, 77C.
28 DZZ 44·837C.

3. The Soteriological Elements in the Enactment of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa

In these few words Jing Jing described the whole great work of "Yingshen" the Messiah:

> He set up eight perfections of virtues, in order to cross the boundary from profane to sacred. He opened the door to the (faith-hope-love) triad which lasts eternally, so that life is refreshed and death abolished. He hung up a brilliant sun to break down the mansion of darkness; the wiles of the devil were then smashed completely to pieces. He navigated his vessel of mercy to go up to the palaces of light; all living beings were then completely saved. His mighty work being thus completed, at midday He ascended to His authentic life.[29]

Obviously, the concepts of "perfection" 度 and "door" 門 that are central here are borrowed respectively from Buddhist concepts of "pâramitâ"度 and "dvarena"門. Both "perfection" 度/pâramitâ and "door" 門/dvarena bear a strong meaning of soteriology, and it can be concluded that the meaning of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa is determined by the attributes included in the connotation of these two terms.

Concerning the soteriological significance of the "perfection" 度/pâramitâ, the right to use the term "soteriological" is reserved here with the same kind of warrant that Max Weber invoked when he used some originally theistic terms outside of their native contexts. Because the word "soteriological" has a measure of pliancy and comparative utility, one can make profitable use of it in the study of nontheistic religions by judicious expansion of the scope of the term's meaning. Generally speaking, soteriology is, from a comparative perspective, a theory according to which certain methods of practice will lead to religious enlightenment and liberation. It has been typical in most scholarly treatments of Mahayana Buddhist soteriology to focus on the path of Bodhisattva. The emergence of the idea of Bodhisattva later shifted the paradigm of Buddhism from the so-called "Hinayana" (the lesser vehicle) to "Mahayan" (the great vehicle). The bodhisattva path in the Mahayana tradition consists of the development of six major pâramitâs (perfections). Here pâramitâs 度 literally means "reaching the other shore" or "ferrying across to infinite endlessness." In order to reach the other shore and develop the perfections, one should turn to and enter the great vehicle. The teaching of Mahayana Buddhism is particularly notable for advocating the deliverance of the self and others, and for maintaining the superiority of the soteriological goal.

Master Zhiyi referred to "Yingshen" as the "Dharma-aggregates of meritorious

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[29] The translation is based on WENG Shaojun's edition of the Jingjiao texts. See WENG 1996, 49.

deeds (功德法聚)", while Master Huiyuan regarded Ying 應/Nirmāṇa as Buddha's response to the "calling of the living beings."[30] For them, the basic way of response is to develop the six major pâramitâs (perfections). Master Huiyuan discussed comprehensively and persuasively in *Mahayana Encyclopaedia* 大乘義章 about the nature, function and interrelationship of the six major perfections. For him, the six perfections – i.e., generosity 佈施, moral discipline 清涼/戒, patience 忍辱, vigour 精進, concentration 禪那/思惟修 and wisdom 般若/慧 – are bodhisattva's paths of "self-benefit and benefiting others. An all-encompassing field of activity is encapsulated in these transcendental virtues, toward which all the bodhisattva's practices are oriented and refined. From the perspective of practice, the six-fold formula of the pâramitâs can be reduced to the Buddhist triad of moral discipline, concentration and wisdom. From the perspective of bodhisattva's orientation, the six perfections focus on (1) the pursuit of Bodhi; (2) the concern for all living beings; and (3) the pursuit of ultimate reality. It is his great heart that leads to the pursuit of Bodhi; it is his broad heart that leads to the concern for all living beings; it is his profound heart that leads to the pursuit of ultimate reality.[31]

In other words, Bodhisattva's orientation is closely geared not only toward the self-enlightenment and self-benefit, but also toward the liberation of all other living beings. From Bodhisattva's path of developing the six perfections, an essential element in the soteriological enactment of Ying 應/Nirmāṇa can be identified.

It is possible that Jing Jing became well-versed in the doctrine of six pâramitâs through his translation of the *Satpâramitâ Sutra* 六波羅蜜經, because he used, in his Xi'an Fu Inscription text, the term "eight perfections of virtues (八境之度)" after the fashion of the six pâramitâs (perfections). According to him, "Yingshen", i.e., the Messiah became man (同人出代) in order to save the people in the world. And it is the "eight perfections of virtues" that can help to "cross the boundary from profane to sacred" and make the "old man" to be the "new man". What Jing Jing called "the eight perfections" are actually "the eight beatitudes" as outlined in Matthew 5:3-10. In the Beginning of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pronounced eight blessings respectively to "the poor in spirit", "those who mourn," "the meek," "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," "the merciful," "the pure in heart," "the peacemakers," "those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Here Jesus gave eight characters of blessed people, representing the principal Christian virtues. From the perspective of Jing Jing, these eight virtues are eight perfections ("eight pâramitâs") motivated and cultivated by Yingshen, the Messiah. Little wonder that the number, struc-

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30 DZZ 44, 837c.
31 DZZ 44, 705a-708a.

ture and meaning of the beatitudes have become the subject of controversy and divergent interpretations. Warren Carter claimed that the "meaning" of Jesus' Sermon embraces both aspects of the "entrance requirements" and the "eschatological blessings", which express two ways to interpret the role of the beatitudes at the start of the Sermon. Carter said, the first part of each beatitude provides norms and demands for the lives of Jesus' followers while the second part pledges entry into the future kingdom for those who live this way. The Sermon is thus primarily addressed to disciples to instruct them about an ethic of discipleship.[32] It is with the same ethicized understanding of the Sermon that Jing Jing regarded the beatitudes as the "entrance requirements". Nevertheless, the clear hermeneutic tension between the "entrance requirements" and the "eschatological blessings" did not exist in Jing Jing's theology. Because the "perfections" 度 is a unity of action 行 and fruit 果 or a simultaneous procedure-goal unity, Jing Jing's doctrine of eight perfections suggests the integration of the "entrance requirements" and the "eschatological blessings." Through the concept of "perfections," Jing Jing epitomized successfully the functional relationship between eschatology and ethics in early East Syriac Christianity.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, the great master of the Antiochian school, maintained in his *Commentary of on the Lord's Prayer* that prayer is not performed by words but "by the choice of a virtuous life and by the love of God and diligence in one's duty."[33] Theodore carried further the ethicizing and spiritualizing of prayer by incorporating the functional relationship between eschatology and ethics into the intentional structure of prayer. The same consideration may be applied to the case of Jing Jing's dealing with the eight beatitudes. It is obvious that Jing Jing had fully comprehended Matthew's tendency to ethicize and spiritualize the eight beatitudes, showing on the one hand the relationship between ethics and eschatology by his epitomization of the eight perfections, and indicating on the hand the soteriological motif in his ethicizing and spiritualizing understanding of the Sermon by defining perfection as "crossing the boundary from profane to sacred." What Jing Jing echoed here is Theodore's and Nestorius' views of Messiah's works. Theodore maintained that, by putting off the old man and putting on the new man, what Messiah has done is to renew all the creatures and bring them to a new and a higher creation.[34] Nestorius also pointed out that "the incarnation of God the Word" should "take place for the whole nature of rational beings."[35] What is important to emphasize here is the functional parallel between Jingjiao's "eight perfections" and Buddhist "six perfections," while their structural differences are respected.

[32] CARTER 1994, 82.
[33] THEODORE 2009, 5.
[34] THEODORE 1932, 19, 39.
[35] NESTORIUS 1925, 70.

4. Conclusion

There is some sort of relationship closer than coincidence that can sufficiently explain the hermeneutic situation of Jing Jing's transplantation strategy. A survey of parallels between Buddhist explanations of Ying and Jing Jing's understanding of Ying shows how much Jing Jing's efforts in Christian inculturation were rooted in both traditions of Chinese Buddhism and East Syriac Christianity. Without doubt, syncretism occurs as an essential feature of Jing Jing's theology. According to his own strategy of inculturation, Jing Jing was successful in creating a Chinese style for his churches. He provided a very inspiring example for comparative religion and comparative theology. Certainly, all of the crossovers require caution, and rash borrowing is a risk for theology, but comparative studies should not be abandoned for fear of the risk.

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Abbreviations:
DZZ = *Dazheng Xinxiu Dazangjing* 《大正新修大藏经》

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As early as AD 781, the writer of the Xi'an Fu inscription described the spread of Syriac Christianity (called *Jingjiao* in Chinese) to China as a wind blowing eastward. The discovery of the Xi'an Fu Stele, the Dunhuang *Jingjiao* Manuscripts, the numerous Syriac tombstones and fragments in Central Asia and many parts of China has unearthed a buried history of Syriac Christianity from the Tang Dynasty to the time of the Mongol Empire. The papers in this volume cover a wide range of topics from manuscripts and inscription, to the historical, liturgical and theological perspectives of Syriac Christianity in this geographic realm.

Li Tang is Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Biblical Studies and Ecclesiastical History, University of Salzburg.
Dietmar W. Winkler is Professor of Patristic Studies and Ecclesiastical History at the University of Salzburg and Director of the Center for the Study of Eastern Christianity (ZECO) of the University of Salzburg.

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